

POLITICAL IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

(Based on Poona critical edition)

BRAJDEO PRASAD ROY, M.A., Ph. D.



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IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA**

●
Dr. B. P. ROY



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Presented to Hon. Dr. B.P. Puri,

With-regard of..

B.P. Roy.

27/9/18.



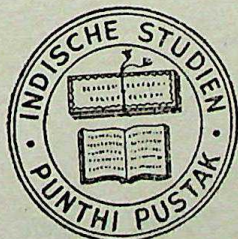
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To

My Parents

ŚRĪ JAGAT BALĪ ROY & SMT. NAGINĀ DEVĪ

PREFACE

The Mahābhārata is one of the two great epics of India. Really, it is the encyclopaedia of ancient India as it deals with different subjects in different contexts. It was enlarged at different periods by persons of different regions, time and mentalities. Like other subjects, it also contains matter on polity aswell. Its importance lies in the fact that it has summarised the views of ancient Indian political thinkers, and further, its writers have discussed numerous political problems in detail. Recently, some scholars have tried to study the political ideas as contained in the Mahābhārata, and some books have come to light dealing with the subject. The present work, is in a way, my humble attempt in the same direction. It embodies my thesis approved by the Patna University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1967.

In this work, a comparative and critical study of the political ideas has been presented. The contemporary literary and archaeological sources have also been utilised to prove the parallel development of political ideas in the same region and time. With the help of inscriptions, attempt has been made to show that the political ideas as discussed in the Mahābhārata were actually followed and practised.

I express my gratitude to my teacher and guide Dr. B. P. Sinha, whose kind help and able guidance enabled me to complete the work. I am very grateful to Dr. R. S. Sharma, Dr. Madan Mohan Singh, Dr. Upendra Thakur and Prof. R. K. Chaudhary for their valuable suggestions. My thanks are due to Sri Kailash Singh, M.L.C., Bihar, and my respected Phuphaji Sri Janak Prasad Singh who helped me in many ways. I am very much indebted to my friend Sri Basudeo Narain who gladly took trouble for correcting the proof and preparing the index. I express my thanks to my

wife Dr. (Mrs.) Shanti Roy, M.B.B.S., Hons. (Gold Medalist), D.G.O., M.S. who though following a different profession always evinced keen interest in the completion of this work.

In spite of my best efforts, some printing mistakes have crept in the work specially in the case of diacritical marks, so I apologise to my readers for their inconveniences.

Mahāśivarātri

11.3.1975

Patna

Brajdeo Prasād Roy

ABBREVIATIONS

AAIP	Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity.
ABI	Annals of Bhandarkar Institute.
ABORS	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
ADCV	Āchārya Dhruva Commemoration Volume.
Ādi	Ādiparva.
ADS	Āpastamba Dharmasūtra.
AGS	Āśvalāyana Gṛihyasūtra.
AHI	Archaeological History of Iran.
AI	Ancient India.
AIA	Ancient Indian Antiquities.
AIC	Ancient Indian Chronology.
AIHT	Ancient Indian Historical Traditions.
AIPTI	Ancient Indian Political Thought and Institu- tions.
Ait. Br.	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.
AJP	American Journal of Philosophy.
Anuśāsana	Anuśāsana Parva.
Āraṇyaka	Āraṇyaka Parva.
Āśrama	Āśramavāsika Parva.
ASWI	Archaeological Survey of Western India.
Āśvamedhika	Āśvamedhika Parva.
AVEIS	A Volume of Eastern and Indian Studies.
AVSI	A Volume of Studies in Indology.
AWIA	Art of war in Ancient India.

B

BDCRI	Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute.
BDS	Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra.
Bhishma	Bhishma Parva.

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POLITICAL IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS

Br. Up.	Bṛihadāranyakopaniṣad.
BV	Bhāratiya Vidyā.

C

CAI	Chronology of Ancient India.
CAI	Classical Accounts of India.
CCAI	Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India.
CCPML	Catalogue of the Coins in Punjab Museum, Lahore.
CF	Compare from.
CHh. Up.	Chhāndogyaopaniṣad.
CIAI	Civilisation in Ancient India.
CII	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
CL	Carmichael Lecture.
CLAI	Corporate Life in Ancient India.
CN	Critical Notes.
CSL	Classical Sanskrit Literature.
CSM	Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata.

D

DHPT	Development of the Hindu Political Theories.
DIA	Development of Indian Polity.
DM	Das Mahābhārata.
DRK	The Divine Rights of the Kings.
Droṇa	Droṇa Parva.

E

EHI	Early History of India.
EI	Epigraphica Indica.
EIP	Evolution of Indian Polity.
ELPAI	Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India.
EM	Epic Mythology
EW	East and West.

G

GBI	The Greeks in Bactria and India.
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GDS	Gautama Dharmasūtra.
GEI	The Great Epic of India.
GI	Gupta Inscriptions.
Govt.	Government.
GP	Gitā Press.
GS	A Guide to Sāñchi.

H

HA	History of Animals.
HAI	Hindu Administrative Institutions.
HASL	History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature.
Hist. Dh.	History of Dharmaśāstra.
HIL	A History of Indian Literature.
HIPI	A History of Indian Political Ideas.
HJS	Hindu Judicial System.
HLE	Hindu Law of Evidence.
HP	Hindu Polity.
HPL	Hindu Public Life.
HPTMF	Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations.
HSL	History of Sanskrit Literature.

I

IA	Indian Antiquities.
I. Ant.	Indian Antiquary.
I. Ant. (Third series)	Indian Antiquary (Third series).
IHO	Indian History Quarterly.
IIAG	The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great.
IKP	India as known to Pāṇini.
ILIRAI	International Law and Interstate relations in Ancient India.
IS	Indian Studien.
I. St.	Indian Studies.
IWPAI	Ideologies of War and Peace in Ancient India.

J

JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
------	---

JBORS	Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Institute.
JBRS	Journal of the Bihar Research Society.
JGRI	Journal of Ganganath Jha Research Institute.
JIH	Journal of Indian History.
JNSI	Journal of the Numismatic Society of India.
JOI	Journal of Oriental Institute.
JRASB	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.

K

KA	Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra.
Karṇa	Karṇa Parva.
KSCV	Kuppuswami Shastri Commemoration Volume.

L

LGAI	Local Govt. in Ancient India.
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M

Manu	Manusmṛiti.
Mauśala	Mauśala Parva.
Mbh.	Mahābhārata.
MM.	Mahābhārata Mīmāṃsā.
MP	Mahābhārata Parichaya.
M. Panho	Milinda Panho.
MPF	Mauryan Public Finance.
MSAI	The Military System in Ancient India.

O

Op.cit.	Opposite Cited.
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P

PAAI	Public Administration in Ancient India.
PASB	Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal.
PCV	D. V. Potadar Commemoration Volume.
PE.	Pillar Edict.
PHAI	Political History of Ancient India.

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PHT	Patañjali and His Times.
PIHC	Proceedings of Indian History Congress.
PIIAI	Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India.
POC	Proceedings of Oriental Conference.
PUJ	Patna University Journal.

Q

QRHS	The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies.
------	---

R

RBIF	Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers.
RB	Railings of Bodh Gayā.
RE	Rock Edict.
RV	The R̥igveda.
RWOS	The "Relationship of War with the Origin of the State.

S

SAAIP	Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity.
Sabhā	Sabhā Parva.
SAIP	Sovereignty in Ancient Indian Polity.
Śalya	Śalya Parva.
Śat. Br.	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
SB	Siddha Bhārati
SBE	Sacred Books of the East.
SBH	The Stūpa of Bharhuta.
SGAI	State and Govt. in Ancient India.
SHD	Sources of Hindu Dharma.
SI	Select Inscriptions.
SI	Śakas in India.
SLDS	Saṅkha-Likhita Dharmasūtra.
ŚP	Śānti Parva.
SR	Sāñchi and its remains.
SRENI	Social and Rural Economy of Northern India.
SS	Śukranīṭisāra.

SSSI	Sanskrit Sāhitya kā Saṁkshipta Itihāsa.
Stri	Strī Parva.
Svarga	Svargārohaṇa Parva.

T

Tai. Br.	Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa.
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U

Udyoga	Udyoga Parva.
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V

VDS	Vaśishṭha Dharmasūtra.
Virāṭa	Virāṭa Parva.
VR	Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa.
VSI	A Volume of Studies in Indology.
VIJ	Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal.

W

WAI	War in Ancient India.
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TRANSLITERATION CHART

A	Ā	I	Ī	U	Ū
अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ
E	Ai	O	Au	Ṁ	H Ri
ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	ः	ऋ
K	Kh	G	Gh	Ṇ	
क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	
Ch	Chh	J	Jh	Ñ	
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ	
T	Th	D	Dh	N	
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण and ॠ	
T	Th	D	Dh	N	
त	थ	द	ध	न	
P	Ph	B	Bh	M	
प	फ	ब	भ	म	
Y	R	L	W or V		
य	र	ल	व		
Ś	Sh	S	H		
श	ष	स	ह		
Ksh	Tra	Jñ			
क्ष	त्र	ज्ञ			

Common words and modern names are usually written
without diacritical marks.

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Chapter I

THE DATE OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

Rise of the Mahābhārata

It is a very complicated problem to fix the date of the composition of the Great Epic though it has been claimed that it was composed by Vyāsa within a period of three years.¹ Its critical perusal reveals that it is not the composition by a single person, and was not composed within a period of three years but a large number of composers belonging to different periods have contributed their shares to the rise of the Mahābhārata from the Bhārata.

The epic² itself informs that it was composed after the Great Battle by Vyāsa with a view to spreading the fame of the great Pāṇḍavas and other Kshatriyas in the world, and was known as the Jaya-Kāvya³ as it narrated the events of the victory of the Pāṇḍavas over the Kauravas.⁴ It is thus apparent that originally the present *Mbh.* was a war-epic consisting of the heroic songs related to the Great Battle. This epic was known as the *Bhārata* as it was composed on the theme of the battle between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas and it consisted of only 24000 Ślokas.⁵ Later, it

1. त्रिभिर्वर्षैः सदोत्थायो कृष्णद्वैपायनो मुनिः ।

महाभारतमाख्यानं कृतवानिदमुत्तमम् ॥

Ādi. 56.32 ; cf. Svarga. 5.41.

2. In this work the term epic stands for the Mahābhārata unless otherwise stated.

3. Ādi. 56.26.

4. Ibid. 56.19 ; Svarga. 5.39.

5. चतुर्विंशतिसाहस्रं चक्रे भारतं संहिताम् ।

उपाख्याने विनीता बद्धा भारतं प्रोच्यते बृधैः ॥

Ādi. 1.61.

was styled as the Śataśāhasri Saṁhitā⁶ containing one hundred thousand Ślokas, but at present (in the critical edition) there are only 82136 Ślokas, divided into 1948 chapters and 18 Parvas in all. The Ślokas, more than triple the original, apparently reveal that it was enlarged during the subsequent ages. It is not possible for one man to compose such a comprehensive work within a few years.

The Mahābhārata informs us that Vyāsa, after composing it, had taught it to his five pupils namely Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, Śuka and Vaiśampāyana.⁷ The *Mbh.* contains the tradition that those five pupils composed five different versions of the original work by their preceptor.⁸ This apparently shows that the original Bhārata was modified by the pupils of Vyāsa, and it is very difficult to say who is the real author of the present *Mbh.* At present, its different versions by the five pupils of Vyāsa are not available though a book by the name of the *Jaiminī-Āśvamedha* is available. Its theme is however, different from that of the present *Āśvamedhika Parva* in the *Mbh.* and the scholars have fixed the date of this work in the beginning of the Christian Era.⁹

The epic was first recited publicly at an elaborate sacrificial session in the form of a free recitation by Vaiśampāyana before king Janamejaya. It was again recited by Sūta, who had heard it only at the first recitation and somehow committed the whole epic to memory. But, just after one single hearing, he could not have reproduced such a voluminous text. Thus, it is apparent that the original epic composed by Vyāsa was soon developed into many recensions by many persons, the process of its development beginning soon after its composition, and continuing for centuries resulting in the present form of the Mahābhārata.

6. इदं शतसहस्रं हि श्लोकानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।
सत्यवत्योत्तमजेनेह व्याख्यात मितौजसा ॥

Ibid. 56.13.

7. Ibid. 57.74-75.

8. Ibid. 57.74-75.

9. *Āśvamedhika*. Introduction, XXIV.

Causes of interpolations :

The question arises as to what were the fundamental causes for interpolations into the epic, and how it was enlarged. A study of this problem reveals that the causes were natural and many in numbers. It was composed in order to spread the fame of the Pāṇḍavas and other great-Kshatriyas,¹⁰ and as such there was much possibility for adding new stories to its body. In this way, a large number of the Upākhyānas were interpolated into it, enlarging its body. As its scope was not limited, it did not remain only a war epic, describing the battle scenes ; on the other hand, all the four objectives of human life were discussed in it, so much so that later a Śloka was interpolated into it which means that every thing may be found in it what is found elsewhere, and nothing can be obtained what is not obtained in this.¹¹ The Bhārata is said to be as much a mine of gems as the illustrious ocean or the Himālayas.¹²

Besides this, an important cause of its enlargement was its being handed down from bard to bard by word of mouth. The reciters added many allied stories to it in order to make its main theme interesting, and this would partly explain the existence of the mass of variants, of differences in sequence and of additions. Whenever, and wherever the text was written down, these transmissions by word of mouth must have contaminated the written text, and introduced innumerable variations in it. The poem which was committed to memory was recited freely as faithfully as the particular reciter could do. This mode of transmission is not calculated to preserve rigid textual purity in any high degree without precautions, such as were adopted in the case of the Vedic texts, but which never existed, as far as one knows, in the case of our epic.

10. Sukthankar, V. S., CSM., Prolegomena, p. 98.

11. Ādi. 56.21-23 ; Svarga. 5.38.

12. यथा समुद्रो भगवान्यथा च हिमवान्निगिरिः ।

ख्याताबुधौ रत्ननिधौ तथा भारतमुच्यते ॥

Ādi, 56.27 ; cf. Svarga. 5.52.

Thus, it may be assumed that even in its early phases its textual tradition must have been not uniform and simple, but multiple and polygenous.¹³

The copyists also were responsible for the development of its body. They copied sometimes the original readings and sometimes the marginals. During the long period of its development they utilised many copies of the text in order to prepare other copies and editions, hence readings of the rival recensions naturally crept into new manuscripts. The possibility of additions of new elements by the copyists may not be ruled out, though it is very difficult to pinpoint them exactly in the present state of our knowledge.

From the linguistic and grammatical point of view, it was not difficult to add new chapters because the epic metre is easy to imitate, the grammar is flexible, and the style is non-descript. Its composers during different periods of its development, added additional lines with skill. The bewildering fluctuations in the text are unique being peculiar to the Mahābhārata. They are not found in the manuscripts of the Vedic literature or in those of the grammatical, philosophical or rhetorical texts or in the works of the classical poets and dramatists. This only proves that the *Mbh.* was peculiarly liable to inflation and elaboration.¹⁴ The view that the Great Epic reached its present form by a gradual process of additions and alterations receives strong support even by scriptal fixation. A study of the manuscripts shows that the text must have been constantly amplified and altered. It grew for centuries not only upwards and downwards, but also laterally like the Nyagrodha tree growing on all sides.¹⁵

The awkwardness of the sexual relations of some of those epic characters of by-gone-ages must have been indeed a puzzle, and a source of constant tribulation to its reciters

13. Ibid. Prolegomena, LXXIX.

14. Ādi. Prolegomena, lxxix & cl.

15. Sukathankar, V. S. CSM, Prolegomena, p. 98.

who were called upon to narrate, explain and justify those old stories to their listeners in course of recitations. In order to justify the out-dated and amazing practices, they carved out new stories, and added to its body for satisfying its readers and listeners. These new stories, later on, became its parts and parcel. In order to justify the marriage of the five Pāṇḍavas with Draupadī, some stories were invented and added to it. Likewise, there are many other examples of this addition of the explanatory stories to it.

The reason of its development has been beautifully explained by a scholar¹⁶ that it was never a fixed and rigid text, but a fluctuating epic tradition. The process of evolution is normal, inevitable and in a sense wholly right. If the epic is to continue to be a vital force in the life of any progressive people, it must be a slow changing book. The fact of elaboration is only an outward indication of its being a book of inspiration and guidance in life, and not merely a book lying unused and forgotten on a dusty book-shelf. These are the touches that have saved the Mahābhārata from the fate of being consigned to the Limbo of Oblivion which has befallen its sister epic like the Gilgamesh.¹⁷

Who were the interpolators ?

The question arises as to who were the persons responsible for the development of the epic ? It is also true that many anonymous scholars have worked at the text to make it smooth and easy of comprehension, and to increase its popularity and usefulness by incorporating into it interesting stories, current and popular explanations.¹⁸

Sukathankar,¹⁹ on the basis of internal matters in the

16. Sukathankar, V. S. CSM, Prolegomena, p. 98.

17. Ādi. Prolegomena, cl.

18. Ādi. Prolegomena, CIII.

19. Sukathankar, V. S., Op.cit. The Bhṛigus and the Bhārata, pp. 278-337.

epic, has tried to show that the Bhārgava Brāhmaṇas were responsible for its development. Their sudden emergence in it is an amazing matter. In the Vedic literature, these people have been shown as the spiritual persons, sacrificial priests, and they practised witchcraft, but in the *Mahābhārata* the Bhārgava myths are distributed over its entire extent with the exception of some short and unimportant Parvas²⁰ comprising in all 2500 stanzas.

What was the motive behind this incorporation of the Bhārgava element? The Pauloma Parva in the *Ādi Parva* is purely a Bhārgava legend, and has no connection with the main theme of the epic. It contains two variant openings, and one of which is clearly inspired by a Bhārgava. It was the Bhārgava Utaṅka who instigated Janamejaya to undertake Nāga-Yajña, at which the epic was first publicly recited. Kulapati Śaunaka himself, before whom it was recited by Sūta Ugrasravas, was also a Bhārgava.²¹ Śaunaka requests Sūta, who had come to recite it to him, to narrate the stories of the Bhārgavas first, and the former did so.²² Here is the shifting of the centre of gravity, in so far as, we have a different interest. The epic does not begin with the Kaurava-Pāṇḍavas, but with the Bhṛigus.

The prominence of the Bhārgava element in the epic was due to some psychological reasons,²³ and it was in the form of a revenge. The *Aurva* legend indicates that the Kshatriyas had almost exterminated the Bhārgavas, but after their survival, they took revenge and interpolated their own glorifying legends into the epic to show their superiority over the Kshatriyas. Hence the story of Paraśurām who massacred them for 21 times. Further, Bhārgavas were the prominent Brāhmaṇas, who were related matrimonially to the kings, were

20. Mbh. 10, 15, 18.

21. *Ādi*. 5.3.

22. *Ādi*. 1.1 ff.

23. Sukathankar, V. S., *Op.cit.*, p. 330.

priests and ministers, and were inventors of war weapons and thus, while narrating the Kshatriya stories, they interpolated their own as well. It seems probable that in the formative period of the epic a powerful Bhārgava influence has been at work which shaped it in its final form. At a critical stage of its evolution, it passed into the sphere of influence of the Bṛigus through the medium of wandering bards. The Bhārgava influence is implied in the person of Kulapati Śaunaka, who requests Sūta to give a new recension, a setting appropriate to it.

The Bhārgava elements are not incorporated only in illustrative history of the glorious Bhārgava priests and heroes, but also in the form of Dharma and Niti. The Bhārgavas had specialised in those branches, and it is clear that the views of Bhārgava-Śukra on these are quoted in the epic. It is also possible that the Bhārgava Brāhmaṇas themselves interpolated the Śukra tradition of political, religious and ethical thoughts or of other Bhārgava thinkers, and by incorporating all these elevated the Mahābhārata as the 5th *Veda*.

Methods of dating

The foregoing discussions clearly indicate that the present Mahābhārata is the developed form of the *Bhārata*. Its original text consisting of 24000 Ślokas, is so mingled with the additional Ślokas that it is very difficult to separate the grains from the chaffs. Its critical edition is neither the exact Bhārata composed by Vyāsa nor the same epic as recited by Vaiśampāyana before Janamejaya. It is also difficult to say that how close it approaches the text of the poem said to be recited by Sūta before Śaunaka. It only claims to be the most ancient one according to the direct line of transmission, purer than others in so far as it is free from the obvious errors of copying and spurious additions.²⁴

24. Ādi. Prolegomena, CIII.

Its present form cannot be accurately dated, nor labelled as pertaining to any particular place or person. The manuscripts, on the basis of which the critical edition has been prepared, are comparatively modern, so the text cannot claim to be very old. The truth is that in an average chapter of this edition, we may read a stanza of the second century B.C. followed by one written in the second century A.D.; sometimes the gap would occur in the middle of the line.

It would be our attempt to fix its date on the basis of internal and external evidences. An accurate date cannot be determined, and the best, which we can do in this direction, is to try to fix the upper- and the lower-most time-limit of its composition.

Review of the views of scholars :—

Western scholars have tried to fix its date on the basis of many grounds, but their conclusions, and the basis thereof are not above criticism.²⁵ According to the tradi-

25. It was Christian Lassen who for the first time tried to fix the date of the Mahābhārata in his book entitled "*The Indian Antiquities*" (1837), and on the basis of many evidences, he fixed the upper limit of the date about the 5th century B.C. Weber (*Indian Studies*, 1852) has, however, fixed the date from the 3rd century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. but he assumes that some additions were made during the 3rd or 4th century A.D. also. Further, Holtzman (*The Mahābhārata Andcentel*, 1892) has advanced peculiar views regarding its date and thinks that it is the book representing the conflict between Śaivism and Vaishṇavism and the gradual absorption of Buddhist elements in it. He regards the present form of the epic not older than the 12th century A.D. Buhler (*Genesis De Mahābhārata*, 1899) has shown that the epic existed in the 5th century A.D. but he thinks that in all probability this date may be pushed back by 4th or 5th centuries B.C. Barth, Hopkins (*the Great Epic*, 1901), Winternitz (*History of Indian Literature*, 1907) and so many other scholars have suggested round about the same dates. The views of these scholars cannot be totally ignored, though we cannot accept them as the accurate date for the composition of the Mahābhārata.

tional Indian view the Mahābhārata was composed just after the Great Battle by Vyāsa who was the father of Dhritarāshtra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura by Niyogavidhi and had witnessed the war. Thus, according to this view, the date of the Bhārata battle should be regarded as the date of the epic. For the time being, if we accept this view then it is essential to fix and find out the date of the outbreak of the Great battle, but here again there is divergence of views amongst scholars.²⁶ Most of them have based their calcula-

26. Pargiter (AIHT, p. 179), Sitanatha Pradhana (CAI, p. 264), R. Shama-Shastri (*The Gavāma-Ayama: the vedic Era*, p. 155, quoted by Krishnamacharya in his "*Classical Samskṛita Literature*, Madras, 1937), Wilson (on the basis of computations of Wilford published in the Asiatic Researches, Vol. 9, chronological tables, p. 116). A. S. Altekar (*Presidential Address, Ancient Section, IHC, Calcutta, 1939*) and Roychoudhury (PHAI, Calcutta, 1927, p. 15) on the basis of average duration of the ruling dynasties have fixed the date of the Bhārata war 950 B.C., 1151 B.C., 1260 B.C., 1370 B.C., 1400 B.C., and round about 1412 B.C. respectively. K. P. Jayaswal, on the basis of the Paurāṇic genealogy, has fixed the date 1424 B.C. (JBORS, Vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 109). S. C. Vaidya-bhushana and L. M. Kara (*Sacred Books of the Hindus, the Matsya Purāṇa*, Allahābad, 1916, Introduction, p. 16) has placed the war in 1922 B.C. On the basis of a statement by Kalhaṇa in his *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, S. S. Bhattacharya fixes the date of war in 2400 B.C. (*Nirukta*, edited by this author, Calcutta, 1804 Saka Era, Vol. 9, p. Gni, the introduction). Mr. Karandikar on the genealogical basis as given in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, fixes the date of the Bhārata battle in 1931 B.C. (quoted by T. Bhattacharya in his article, the date of the Bhārata War, JGRI, Vol. 8, pt. 1, pp. 2-3) Mr. Sengupta would place the war in 2448 B.C. (P. C. Sengupta, *Bhārata battle tradition*, JRSB, vol. 4, pp. 393-413). On the basis of a statement in the Aihola inscription of Pulakeśin 2nd, dated Śaka era 556, (637 A.D.), the date of the Bhārata battle has been fixed about 3103 B.C. (*Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 8, p. 241), though according to the orthodox calculating system, it falls in 3101 B.C. D. S. Triveda on the basis of the references regarding the Kṛishṇa's demise and the statement of Al-Beruni regarding the Yudhishthira era, (*Ain-i-Akbari* translated by H. S. Janett, Calcutta, 1891, Vol. 3, p. 15) has fixed the date of the out break of war in 3137 B.C. (D. S. Triveda, *Five thousand years ago the Mahābhārata war*, AVSI presented to P. V. Kane, pp. 522-524).

tions on the geneologies as given by the *Purāṇas* and on the astronomical data supplied by them, hence the differences. According to these scholars, the date of the Bhārata battle ranges from 950 B.C. to 3137 B.C., so the date of the composition, according to these traditional views, ranges from 950 B.C. to 3137 B.C., but, we cannot accept this period as the time during which the epic may be supposed to have been composed. In accepting this period, we have to face other problems as well, and in short, it may be said that even the lowest limit of the probable date of the Bhārata war : 950 B.C. also cannot be regarded as the date of the composition of the Mahābhārata, as the linguistic and historical grounds militate against accepting this date.

Recently an attempt has been made to fix the date of the Bhārata battle²⁷ on the basis of archæological excavations. Excavations at Hastināpur and other places in the Gangetic valley indicate two periods : (1) the period of the Red-Ware having red slip, and (2) the Painted Grey-Ware. The latter was provisionally attributed to the early Āryans, which means the Vedic Āryans. Their first phase ends with the Bhārata war about 950 B.C. The C-14 dates from Hastināpur for the Painted Grey-Ware are late, those from Atranjikhhera are quite early, and corroborate the dates arrived at by Lal from other considerations. Accepting provisionally the attribution of the painted grey ware to the Āryans, we shall have to go a step further, and suggest that this represents the culture of the Purus and Bhāratas.²⁸ P. L. Bhargava, on the basis of critical analysis of the Vedic and Paurāṇic data, has prepared the chronology of ancient India,²⁹ and has fixed the date of the

27. Sankaliya, H. D. Traditional Indian Chronology and C-14 dates of excavated sites, *JIH*, Vol. XLII, pt. 3rd, pp. 637-640.

28. Sankaliya, H. D. Traditional Indian Chronology and C-14 dates of excavated sites, *JIH*, Vol. XLII, pt. 3rd, pp. 637-640. Ancient India, Nos. 9-10.

29. *India in the Vedic Age—A History of Āryan expansion in India.*

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Bhārata war about 1000 B.C. From the archæological point of view this date is more plausible.

This date also cannot be accepted as the probable date of the composition of the epic on the same ground as discussed earlier. Apart from all the logical grounds, it may be said that the composition of a book based on some historical incident is not to be supposed during the period of its happening, or at the same time of the happening of the incident. So, its compositional period cannot be pushed back to the middle of the tenth century B.C. or to the earlier periods as referred to in foregoing pages.

In view of the conflicting evidences discussed above, we now propose to examine the internal and external evidences, in order to find out a probable date for the composition of the epic in the following lines.

Internal evidence

The internal evidences throw considerable light on the probable upper and the lower limits of its date and beginning from the bottom, we shall try to reach the summit.

Foreign tribes

The Mahābhārata contains many references to the foreign tribes in many contexts. The dates of their arrival and their contact with India are known to us on the basis of many literary and archæological evidences. A study of these references would go a long way in fixing its probable date.

The Hūnas are referred to as being defeated by Nakula in the western direction³⁰ beyond the Indus river, and again the epic shows them as having come to offer presents to

30.

रमठान्हारहूणाश्च प्रतीच्याश्चैव ये नपाः ।
तान्सर्वान्स वशे चक्रे शासनादेव पाण्डवः ॥

Sabbā. 29.11.

Yudhishtira.³¹ These references indicate India's acquaintance with them in the west beyond the Indus, and not in the interior of the country. They were the Central Asian people, and had reached Persia during the reign of Beharāma the 5th (420-438 A.D.).³² Kālidāsa refers to them in the Pamirs on the banks of the Indus river.³³ For the first time, they appear in western India in the middle of the 5th century A.D. during the reign of Skandagupta, as is evident from his Junagarh and the Bhītari inscriptions.³⁴ So, it seems that before this date, they were outside the Punjab, and resided in the Gandhāra and Pamira regions.³⁵ The testimony of Kālidāsa also proves the same. The references to them in the epic and in the Raghuvamśam are the same. The date of Kālidāsa is a controversial matter, generally ranging from the 1st century B.C. to the beginning of the 5th century A.D. Whatever the fact, it is certain that the Hūnas had not reached the interiors of India at least by the beginning of the 5th century A.D., although the Indians had heard of them even before this period as they were on the frontiers of this country. There should be no objection, if it is assumed that they were known to the Indians even during the 4th or the 3rd centuries A.D.³⁶ Hence, on this basis, the date of the particular portions of the epic may be of the same period.

The epic refers to the Romans in connection with the expedition by Sahadeo in the south and it knows of their city and that part of India (Romāṁ Yavanānām Puram).³⁷ The

31. चीनान्हूणाञ्चकानोडान्पर्वतान्तरवासिनः ।

वारुण्येयान्हारहणाञ्च कृष्णान्हेमवतांस्तथा ॥

Ibid. 47.19.

32. Bagchi, P. C. India and Central Asia, pp. 9-10.

For details, see U. Thakur, *The Hūnas in India*, Chap. I.

33. *Raghuvamśam*, 4.67.

34. Sircar, D. C. *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 309 & 328 respectively.

35. Cf. Thakur, *op.cit.*, Chap. III.

36. *Ibid*, Chap. III.

37. *Sabbā*, 28.49.

excavations conducted by Wheeler at Arikamedu,^{37a} two miles south of Pondichery, have revealed the existence of the Roman settlement there, and a large number of Roman coins and potteries belonging to the 1st century A.D. have been found at that place. Besides this, at many other places in south India, these things have been found.³⁸ In Indian literature, it is the oldest occurrence of the name of the Romans. It indicates that the respective portion of the epic was written after the city name became known to the Indians. This means surely not before the 1st century B.C. and very likely not until a century or two later. The Indian trade with Rome was in full swing since the beginning of the Christian era, and it continued up to the 5th century A.D. both through the land and sea routes.³⁹ In the works of Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy there are many references to India's contact with the Romans. The Roman soldiers and beautiful girls were employed in the courts of the south Indian kings, and many coins of Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, Nero and Domitian have been found in South India. All these kings, except Augustus, ruled after the beginning of the Christian era.⁴⁰ This clearly shows South India's close contact with the Romans at least from the 1st century B.C. to the 4th century A.D., and this, in our view, should be the probable date of the composition of the particular portion in the *Sabhā Parvan*.

The references to the Rishikas and Tushāras in the epic help us in fixing its date. The Rishika⁴¹ people were

37a. Wheeler, M., *RBIF*, pp. 173-178.

38. *Ibid*, pp. 164-182.

39. Filliozat, J. "Intercourse of India with the Roman Empire during the opening centuries of the Christian Era", *IHQ*, Vol. 28, pt. 1, pp. 23-24.

40. Dubreuil, J. G. "India and the Romans", *IA*, Vol. LII (1923), pp. 50-53.

41.

ऋषिकेषु तु संग्रामो बभूवातिभयङ्करः ।

तारकामयसंकाशः परमर्थिकपार्थयोः ॥

Sabhā, 24.25.

conquered by Arjuna beyond the Vakshu (oxus) river which flowed through the Śaka country. They were defeated in the Himavanta region, identified with the present Hemodon, north of the Pamirs. Strabo refers to the Asioi, who, along with the Tokharoi and the Sakrauoi, conquered Bactria from the Greeks.⁴² Perhaps, the Asioi are the Rishikas or the Yueh-Chis. The process of Arjuna's victory in the north direction shows that the Rishikas resided in Central Asia, as the former had defeated them in the north after defeating the Vāhlikas, Kambojakas, Dardas and the Lohas.⁴³ They resided in that region up to the 1st quarter of the 2nd century B.C. Thus, it is apparent that the epic refers to them in their original home, hence, the date of the specific portion may be assigned to that period.

The Tushāras⁴⁴ or the Tukhāras were a branch of the Yueh-Chis and are mentioned as having offered presents to Yudhishthira.⁴⁵ These are identified with the Tokharoi as referred to by Strabo who ousted the Greeks in Balkh. The Rishika and Tushāra, the two branches of the Yuen-Chis, came to India in the 1st century A.D. and ruled over a vast territory. The Tushāra-Rishikas ruled in India from the beginning of the Christian era to the second century A.D. and this gave an appropriate occasion for the composers of the epic to mention them in its developing form hence it seems that its portions referring to them were most probably added to it some time between the 2nd century B.C. and the 3rd century A.D. or even after that.⁴⁶

The Mahābhārata refers to the Pahlavas along with the

42. Strabo, Book 2, Ch. 8, quoted by V. S. Agrawala in some foreign words in Ancient Saṁskṛita literature, *IHQ*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 12-13.

43. Sabhā. 24.24-26.

44. For the Tushāra problem see Bagchi, P. C., *India and Central Asia*, pp. 127-132.

45. Sabhā. 47.26.

46. Bagchi, *India and Central Asia*, pp. 5-8.

Yavanas, Gandhāras and the Chīnas⁴⁷ (Chinese) ; these again are grouped together with the Śaka and Yavanas, and are referred to as being defeated by Nakula in the Western direction.⁴⁸ The epic, furthermore, refers to them along with the Ambashthas, Kukuras, Tārkshtyas, Vasātis, Mauleyas, and the Kshudraka-Mālavas.⁴⁹ The Pahlavas are identified with the Parthians. They ruled from eastern Iran to Western India, and became prominent after the fall of the Greco-Bactrians in western India. Gondophernes was the most famous Pārthian king (19-45 A.D.), and in Rapson's view his successor Pakores ruled over the Punjab, as his coins have been found there. The Kushāṇas ousted them in the middle of the 1st century A.D. Their rule over the Punjab or in western India is evident from their grouping with the republics and other tribes of that region. So, it may be assumed that the references to them in the epic belong to the period from the 1st century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. or even later.

The Ābhiras are referred to as having settled on the banks of the Sarasvatī river along with the Śūdras in the Indus valley.⁵⁰ They were excellent fighters and have been grouped together with the Sindhu-Sauvīras and the Gandhāras.⁵¹ They were uncivilised people, and the epic regards them as the *Dasyus* (dacoits), *Pāpakarmaṇāḥ* (sinners), *Lobhopahatachetasaḥ*⁵² (greedy) and the *Mlechchas*⁵³ (dirty barbarians). They had robbed the widowed wives of Kṛishṇa with their belongings in the 'Pañchanada country, when they were proceeding with

47. ŚP. 65.13.

48. *Sabhā*. 20.13 & 29.15.

49. *Ibid*. 48.14.

50. मद्राभोरगणाश्चैव ये चाश्रित्य सरस्वतीम् ।
वर्तयन्ति च ये मत्स्यैश्च पर्वतवासिनः ॥

Sabhā. 29.9.

51. ŚP. 102.3.

52. *Mausala*. 8.43-45.

53. *Ibid*. 8.61.

Arjuna from Dvārakā to Hastināpura after the great demise of the Lord.⁵⁴ These references clearly indicate that they had settled in the Indus valley and most probably in the S.E. Punjab. They were nomadic people. They probably, came with the Śakas from Central Asia, and are not referred to in any Indian work prior to the 2nd century B.C. During the time of Patañjali, it was a controversial matter whether they should be regarded as a sub-caste of the Śūdras or a separate class (Śūdrābhīraṃ)⁵⁵. The epic also refers to them.⁵⁶ Ptolemy mentions them as having settled in the district named Abiria in the Indus valley.⁵⁷ In 181 A.D. the Kshatrapa Rudrasimha refers to his General Rudrabhūti Ābhīra.⁵⁸ Bharata in his *Nāṭyasūtra* classes them with the Chandālas, and locates them in the Indus valley.⁵⁹ Thus, all these sources locate them in the Indus valley. Therefore, it seems quite probable that references to them in the epic belong to the period when they were settled in the Indus valley, perhaps from the 2nd century B.C. to the 2nd or the 3rd century A.D. Later on, they are seen in central Mālawā as a republican people,⁶⁰ but this settlement is not referred to in the epic, so the above mentioned date may be regarded as the possible date for the composition of the respective portions of the Mahābhārata.

The epic refers to the Chinese and groups them with the Yavana, Kirāta, Śabara, Barbara, Śaka, Tushāra and the Pahlava people, and mentions them as the people devoid of religion.⁶¹ In connection with Arjuna's victory in the northern direction, they are referred to as being defeated by

54. Ibid. 8.43-61.

55. Mahābhāṣya, 1.2.3 on Pāṇini 1.2.73.

56. Śālya. 36.1-2.

57. Quoted by Wilson in *Indian Caste*, Vol. 1, p. 111.

58. Bhandarkar, D. R. *Inscriptions of Rudrasimha*, IA, (1911), p. 16.

59. *Nāṭyasūtra*, 17.49, 55, 61.

60. *Prayāga-Prasasti of Samudragupta*. (Sircar, D. C., *op.cit.*, p. 258).

61. *ŚP*. 65.13-15.

him,⁶² and are mentioned along with those people who had come to offer presents to Yudhishthira.⁶³ They offered beautiful clothes made in China,⁶⁴ which may indicate commercial relation between the two countries. The first literary reference to China is found in the Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra⁶⁵ in the context of trade and commerce. The Accounts of Chang-Ch'ien also prove that India and China had commercial relation even during the second century B.C.⁶⁶ which was cultivated not only through the land route but also through the sea route. The Kushāṇas gave a new orientation to this already established trade relations by introducing Buddhism into China in the middle of the 1st century A.D., and since then, the intercourse, both cultural and commercial, became more frequent. The references to the Chinese in the epic perhaps, belong to the period from the 1st century A.D. to the 3rd or 4th century A.D., but its possibility of belonging to some earlier centuries also cannot be ruled out, and may be pushed back even up to the 2nd century B.C.

The Śakas also find place in the epic and have been grouped together with the Yavanas and Pahlavas in the Western India.⁶⁷ They come to offer presents to Yudhishthira.⁶⁸ The *Mahābhārata* is acquainted with the central Asian geography, and furnishes a full description of the Śakadvīpa. The Bhīshma Parva⁶⁹ refers to the original home of the Śakas at a time when they were settled in their original homeland of Chinese Turkistan and beyond it. They migra-

62. Sabbā. 23.19.

63. Ibid. 47.19.

64. Ibid. 47.22.

65. Jayaswal K. P. *HP*. Pp. 373-374.

66. Cutts, E. H., Chinese-Indian contacts prior to the latter half of the First Century A.D., *IHQ*, Vol. 14, No. 3. Pp. 493-494.

67. Bhīshma. 20.13 & ŚP. 65.13.

68. Sabbā. 47.19 & 26.

69. Bhīshma, Ch. 12.

ted to Seistan^{69a} during the 2nd century B.C. but the epic geography places the Śākadvīpa in a much earlier period. It further refers to the region between the rivers Ikshu (the Oxus) and the Sītā which flowed westward.⁷⁰ The Bhishma Parva refers to the Kumāra Parvata⁷¹ as a division of the Śākadvīpa which corresponds to Comedai as referred to by Herodotus. The Mañjalā river of the Śākadvīpa seems to be the Jaddā river. The Kshiroda is placed on the boundary of the Śākadvīpa which was the old name of the Caspian sea.⁷² The Mañjalā river flowed through the Śākadvīpa in Central Asia. The Sabhā Parva⁷³ refers to the famous horn-shaped head-dresses of the Śakas and these are noticeable in the Mathurā sculptures of the Kushāṇa period.

From the Chinese sources it is known that the Śakas, being pressed by the Hūṇas, left their original homeland and settled near Balkha⁷⁴ in the second century B.C. After that, they migrated to Sindh through the Bolan Pass, where, by the middle of the 1st century B.C., they had established their stronghold. In about 57 B.C. they advanced to Ujjain. Already they had occupied western Punjab and Gandhāra, as the coins of Maues found in that region

69a. For the location of Śākadvīpa see Sankrityayana, Rahula, Madhya Asia kā Itihāsa, I. Pp. 64-65.

70. सुकुमारी कुमारी च सीता कावेरका तथा ।
महानदी च कौरव्यतथा मणिजलानदी ।
इक्षुवर्धनिका चैव तथा भरतसत्तम् ॥

Ibid. 12.30.

71. Bhishma. 12.24.

72. Bhishma. 12.9.

73. शकास्तुखारा कङ्काश्च रोमशाः श्रु'गिणो नराः ।
महागमान्बूरगमान्गणितानबु'वं हयान् ॥

Sabhā, 47.26.

74. Whitehead, R. B. CCPML, Vol. I, Introduction, p. 171.

suggest.⁷⁵ During the second century A.D. they challenged the power of the Sātavāhanas on the western coast and in the Deccan.⁷⁶ They had occupied even the central Mālawā and ruled there till 390 A.D. and thereafter they were exterminated by Chandra Gupta II. But, it is interesting to know that the epic does not refer to them as being settled in Sindh, the Punjab, Deccan or in Mālawā, but in the Śakadvīpa—their original homeland in Central Asia. Thus, these specific portions of the epic may be regarded as old as the 2nd century B.C. or some even later centuries.

The Vāhlika people are referred to along with the Dardas, Darvas, Vaiyamakas, Audumbaras and the Pāradas.⁷⁷ The Karṇa Parva furnishes details regarding the geographical boundary of the Vāhlika country, and mentions the manners and customs of its inhabitants, who were disliked by the people of other parts of the country.⁷⁸ The epic regards them as the dullards, who would not understand things unless beaten.⁷⁹

The Vāhlika country includes the territory of the Punjab.⁸⁰ The Vāhlikas are identified with the residents of Balkh, and more apparently, with the Indo-Bactrians who invaded the Punjab, and ruled for two centuries from early 2nd century B.C. to the beginning of the Christian era. They professed a different religion and as such, they have been regarded as the *Dharmavāhya* (Irreligious) and *Aśuchi* (Impure). The epic therefore instructs the people to discard them (Varjayet).⁸¹ Their mode of conduct was not good, and they were

75. Ibid. Pp. 91-97.

76. Sircar, D. C., op.cit., Pp. 164-175.

77. Sabhā. 48.12.

78. Karṇa. 30.10-11.

79. Ibid. 30.81.

80. Ibid. 30.9-11.

81. पञ्चानां सिन्धुपष्ठानां नदीनां येऽन्तराश्रिताः ।

तान्धर्मबाह्यान्शुचीन्बाल्हीकान्परिवर्जयेत् ॥

Ibid. 30.11.

devoid of religion. No one should go to them, and reside in their association.⁸² Śākala on the banks of the Āpagā river⁸³ is referred to as the city of the Vāhlikas. Perhaps, all these references are related to the Indo-Bactrians in the Punjab. Karna's vilification of the Madras presents a true picture of the social life in the Central Punjab. It contains an exaggerated description, which was intended to degrade the inhabitants of the Madra country. It is not intended for the Āryan inhabitants of the Punjab, but for the Indo-Bactrians who conquered the Madra country in 2nd century B.C. and made Śākala as their capital. After an analysis of the whole passage relating to the Vāhlikas in the Madra country, one may clearly see that the ways of living of those people were non-Āryan, so the interpolator here, got a suitable opportunity to release the passage as a venom to prejudice the popular mind against the Indo-Bactrians of the Punjab and Gandhāra.⁸⁴ These references in the epic belong perhaps to a period sometime between 2nd century B.C. and 1st century A.D.

The Yavanas have been referred to many times in the epic such as coming to offer presents to Yudhishthira⁸⁵ and fighting on the side of the Kauravas on the battle-field of the Kurukshetra.⁸⁶ They have been regarded as dacoits, and for the Indians they posed a problem, which finds an explicit reference in the story of king Māndhātā and Vishṇu. The former questions the latter as to how they could be persuaded to follow the Dharma and in reply Lord Vishṇu suggests the means to be adopted to persuade them to follow the Dharma.⁸⁷ This statement clearly indicates the measures

82. एवं हीनेषु व्रात्येषु बालहोत्रेषु दुरात्मसु ।
कश्चेतयानो निवसेत्सुहृत्तमपि मानवः ॥

Ibid. 30.26.

83. Ibid. 30.14.

84. Karna. 30.9-88.

85. Sabhā. 47.12-14.

86. Bhishma. 20.13.

87. ŚP. 65.13-21.

adopted by the Indians for their Indianisation. Their settlement in the outskirts of Mathurā has been mentioned in the epic.⁸⁸ It apparently refers to the period when the Greeks had invaded Mathurā and settled down there during the 2nd century B.C.

The contact of the Indians with the Yavanas began many centuries before this date. Pāṇini refers to their script.⁸⁹ Even before Alexander's invasion of India, the Indians had acquaintance with the Greeks and this was due to the establishment of political power of Persia⁹⁰ over western India and Greece. But, the references to them in the epic, it seems, refer to them after the invasion by Alexander, and probably after the Greeco-Bactrian's invasion, when it was possible for them to settle in the outskirts of Mathurā. The problem of their Indianisation also arose after their arrival in this country in a large number. Keeping in view the above facts, it is apparent that the specific portions of the epic belong to 2nd or 1st century B.C. or a century later, though the possibility of their being older than 2nd century B.C. also cannot be ruled out.

Astronomical data

It is also to be noted that in ancient India, astronomical calculations were based mainly on the Nakshatras. The pre-Gupta works on astronomy refer to them and not to the *Rāsis*, but it does not mean that the Indians were totally ignorant of them. Their introduction in Indian astronomy is a controversial matter. Generally, it is believed that the Greeks introduced⁹¹ them in our astronomy,

88. तथा यवनकाम्बोजा मथुरामभितश्च ये ।

येते नियदधकुशला दाक्षिणात्यासिचर्मिणः ॥

Ibid. 102.5.

89. Ashādhyaī, 4.1.49.

90. Woodcock, George., *The Greeks in India*, Pp. 16-22.

91. Woodcock, George., *op.cit*, p. 155.

and the depiction of the Zodiacal signs on the railings of Bodh Gayā Temple⁹² indicates that Indians had borrowed this Rāśi-system by the 1st century B.C. The question now arises whether the epic refers to the Rāśi or not. Its perusal shows that in astronomical matters the Nakshatras are always mentioned, and not the Rāśis. But, in the epic there is only one reference to it where it is pointed out that when the sun, the moon, Jupiter and Tishya will come together on the same Rāśi (*Eka Rāśau*), Kṛita Yuga will begin.⁹³ In this connection, the view of Mr. P. V. Kane⁹⁴ about the genuineness of this respective verse, and its borrowing from the *Vāyu-Purāṇa* also cannot be accepted, as in that Purāṇa the word is "*Eka-Rātrau*"⁹⁵ and not "*Eka-Rāśau*". The solitary reference to the Rāśi in the *Āraṇyaka Parva* indicates that the particular lines or the portions were composed some time after the second century B.C.

Basis of numismatic details

The numismatic references also go a long way in fixing the date of the ancient works. The *Mahābhārata*⁹⁶ refers to many types of coins such as the Nishka, Suvarṇa, Śāṇa and Prati. All these coin-names were coined before the Śuṅga-age and were current even during the succeeding periods.

The epic refers to the Nishka as a neck-ornament.⁹⁷ It mentions the Varuṇa-conch which was secured in a network of strings made of Nishkas.⁹⁸ The *Sabhā-Parva* refers to the

92. Barua, B. M. *Gayā and Buddha-Gayā*, Vol. II, Pp. 85, 121.

93. *Āraṇyaka*. 188.87.

94. Kane, P. V. The problem of the Introduction of Rāśis in Indian Astronomy and Astrology, BV, Vol. 9, pt. 1, Pp. 311-314.

95. *Vāyu*. 99.413.

96. For details see, Agrawala, V. S., *Coin data in the Mahābhārata*, ABORI, Vol. 38, pts. 3-4, Pp. 161-174.

97. *Sabhā*. 54.12.

98. *Ibid*. 49.14-15.

Suvarṇa coins in millions brought by the Śakas and Tushāras of the north.⁹⁹ On the evidence of Pāṇini¹⁰⁰ and others, it is apparent that the Nishka was a type of coin and was a medium of exchange. Even in literary works belonging to the beginning of the Christian era these have been frequently referred to. These references to the Nishka in the epic guide us in fixing its date to the beginning of the Christian era, but it should be regarded as the lower time limit. The term Dināra does not occur in the main parts of the epic which became a popular name of gold coin in India after the 2nd century B.C.

In the epic, there is a reference to the coin known as the Śāṇa.¹⁰¹ It shows that 8 Śāṇa-coins were equal to one Śatamāna. The Śatamāna was 100 Rattis in weight, and the Śāṇa was equal to 12.5 Rattis or 25 grains. Śatamāna and the Śāṇa coins have been found¹⁰² in different parts of this country.

King Rītuparṇa had appointed Nala as his Aśvādhyaksha on a salary of "Śataim-Śatāḥ".¹⁰³ This may be supposed as his monthly pay : one hundred Śatamānas per month ; Śataim means 100, and Śatāḥ means Śatamānas, so the annual salary would be $100 \times 12 = 1200$ Śatamānas. These are 120000 Rattis of silver and when converted into the Kārshāpaṇas each of 32 Rattis, would be 3750 silver Kārshāpaṇa coins. It tallies with the salary of an Aśvādhyaksha as referred to by Kauṭilya who fixes 4000.¹⁰⁴ On this basis, the date of the portion containing

99. Ibid. 47.26-27.

100. Aṣṭādhyāyī. 5.2.119.

101. Āraṇyaka. 134.14.

102. JNSI, Vol. 14, Pp. 22-26.

103. स त्वमातिष्ठ योगं तं येन शीघ्रा हया मम ।
भवेयस्वाध्यक्षोऽसि वेतनं तं शतं शताः ॥

Āraṇyaka. 64.6.

104. K.A. 5.3. [References from the Arthaśāstra indicate Adhikaraṇa and Adhyāya respectively].

such information would be approximately the Mauryan-Śunga-age.

The epic does not refer to the coin known as the *Kārshāpaṇa* or *Paṇa*. In the *Jātakas* and other early works, these coins are referred to in numbers of 100, 1000 and so on. These numerical references indicate that the *Kārshāpaṇa* coins were either of silver or copper. Such references are found even in the *Mahābhārata* as it refers to *Sahasra*¹⁰⁵ (1000 of the *Kārshāpaṇas*) as the price of a chariot, and as the amount of a tribute respectively. It is in the style of the earlier works like the *Jātakas* and the *Arthaśāstra*, which may prove the date of the particular portion of the epic as the 4th or the 3rd century B.C. or even earlier.

The epic contains a very interesting information regarding the '*Prati*' a coin-type. *Nārada* wants to know from *Yudhishthira* whether he distributed seed and food to his peasantry in distress, and advanced agricultural relief-loans to them at the concessional rate of one *Prati* for each one hundred coins.¹⁰⁶

The rate of interest is one *Prati* for one hundred, but, what is this "*Prati*"¹⁰⁷ and when did it come into existence? The earliest reference to it we have in *Kātyāyana* on *Pāṇini*¹⁰⁸ and according to the former it is the substitute for the coin named *Kārshāpaṇa*.¹⁰⁹ "*Pratikam śataim*" means one hundred silver *Kārshāpaṇas* on which one *Prati* was realised as *monthly interest* : 12 per cent per annum, being the conces-

105. *Sabbā*. 54.5, 32.20.

106. कच्चिद्दीजं च भक्तं च कर्षकायावसीदते ।

प्रतीकं च शतं बद्ध्या ददास्यरामनुग्रहम् ॥

Sabbā. 5.68.

107. *Agrawala*, V. S., *Prati* as a coin name, *JNSI*, Vol. 7, p. 32.

108. *Ashtādhyāyī*. 4.1.55.

109. *Agrawala*, V. S., *Mahābhārata Notes*, *ABORI*, Vol. 26, pts. 1-4, Pp. 79-80.

sional rate. The term *Prati* in the same sense occurs in the inscriptions of Nahapāna at Nāsika. Ushavadatta, his son-in-law, gave 3000 of the *Kārshāpaṇas* for the benefit of the Buddhist Saṃgha, and invested them with two guilds, two thousands in a weaver's guild on interest at the rate of one "Prati" for one hundred, and 1000 in an another weaver's guild; the interest being three quarters of a *Padika* for one hundred.¹¹⁰ In this inscription there are terms like "Vṛiddhi", *Kārshāpaṇa* and "*Prati Vṛiddhi pratikaśataṃ*" which are identical with those used in the epic, "*Pratikāṃ cha Śataṃ vṛiddhyā*"¹¹¹. Both refer to the amount of one hundred, fetching one coin (*Prati*) at the rate of one percent monthly. In the Kanherī cave inscription¹¹² No. 15, there is reference to an endowment of two hundred *Kārshāpaṇas* at the "*Pratika*" rate of interest: one *Kārshāpaṇa* as one percent per month. The coin *Prati* by the name is unknown prior to Kātyāyana. Pāṇini does not refer to it. The Nāsika Inscription referring to it is dated the 42 (Śaka era), i.e. 120 A.D. The existence of *Prati* coin by this particular name is seen from the 4th century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. and it seems that the chapter known as the Nārada-Rājanīti was added to the epic some time during this period.

Besides this, coins issued by the republican states, such as the Yaudheyas, Mālawas, Audumbaras, Andhaka-vṛishṇis and others have been found. On palæographic ground, these coins belong to the period from 2nd century B.C. to 4th century A.D. In the epic these republican people have been referred¹¹³ to, as such, they may be placed in the same period.

110. Sircar, D. C., SI, p. 165.

111. Sabhā. 5.68.

112. Burgess, ASWI, Vol. 5, Pp. 79-80.

113. Infra, Ch. 6, Pp. 209-222.

The Prākāravaprakuṇḍala

The Mahābhārata refers to the Prākāravaprakuṇḍala¹¹⁴ which was put on in the ears. This type of Kuṇḍala is seen on the ears of human figures on the railings and gateways of Bharhut and Sāñchī Stūpas. What is the shape of this ornament? An etymological study of this word indicates that it consisted of a square plaque to which a projection with two spiral turns is attached at the back. Its front portion is adorned with a design of four petalled-flower.¹¹⁵ It is noteworthy that this type of ornament is not found in the Indian art before the Śuṅga period. In sculptures of the Kushāṇa period the Kuṇḍalas take the form of pendants cylindrical in shape, and this also was changed in the Gupta period, when the ear-ring of heavy discular shape resembling a wheel was innovated.¹¹⁶ Literary descriptions are generally illustrated in the art specimens of each age, and it may prove valuable for fixing the date of the epic. In Prākāravaprakuṇḍala the Vapra seems to be the spiral attached, and Prākāra the cubical back portion of the Kuṇḍalas familiar to us in the sculptures of the Mauryan and the Śuṅga periods and later, as such this may be the date of the specific portion of the Mahābhārata.

The Śīsumārapurāṇ

The architectural details also help us in fixing the date of the Mahābhārata and in this connection the term Śīsumārapurāṇ is very important. On the occasion of the Svayamvara of Draupadī, the citizens and guests proceeded to a specially

114. अथापरोऽदृश्यत रूपसंपदा स्त्रीणामलंकाराधरोबहुपमान ।
प्राकारवप्रे प्रतिमुच्य कुण्डले दीर्घे च कम्बूपरिहाटके शुभे ॥

Virāṭa. 10.1.

115. Cunningham, Bharhuta, Plates 22-23.

116. Agrawala, V. S., Mbh. Notes 2, ABORI, Vol. 23, pts. 1-4, Pp. 20-21.

built Svayaṁvara Maṇḍapa known as the Śiśumārapuraṁ¹¹⁷ which is a technical term denoting the gateway architecture of the city, railing and Maṇḍapa. The vaulted ends of the architrave of the temple cross-beams were adorned with figure of fish tailed alligators in a very attractive and prominent style. It is seen on the Sāñchi gateway and this architectural gateway-motif continued up to the Kushāṇa period, as the Mathurā art of this period furnishes many examples of this design. This feature is not referred to in the Buddhist or Jain literature earlier than the second century B.C. Further, the term Śiśumārapuraṁ stands for the architrave of Torana carved with an alligator's head, built during the 2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century¹¹⁸ A.D., which suggests that this may be the probable date of the respective portion of the *Ādi-Parva* in the Mahābhārata.

Cavalry with mounted archers

The epic refers to the mounted archers¹¹⁹ but not even a single reference is found to them in the Jātakas and the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya which describe cavalry in detail. The early works on the Dhanurveda also do not mention such soldiers and even in the pre-Gupta literature there are no frequent references to them.

It is now to be found out when the Indian mounted archers came into use. Generally, it is regarded that the Scythians were the effective mounted archers who spread the art of mounted archery in the east.¹²⁰ If this view is accepted,

117.

ततः पौरजनाः सर्वे सागरोद्धतनिःस्वनाः ।

शिश्मारपुरं प्रात्थ न्यविशंस्ते च पार्थिवाः ॥

Ādi. 176.15.

118. Agrawala, V. S., The Mbh. Notes, 3rd, ABORI, Vol. 26, pts. 1-2, Pp. 283-286.

119. Ādi. 124.24-28.

120. Smith, J. R., quoted by P. K. Gode in Mounted bowmen on Indian battle fields, BDCRI, Vol. 8, p. 34.

then it is to be regarded that the Indians adopted it from them. They had invaded India in the middle of 2nd century B.C.¹²¹ Now, the problem of the mounted archery as referred to in the epic may be solved. It seems that this practice and method of fighting as mentioned in the Mahābhārata was adopted at a time when the Indians came to know of it as a result of their contact with the Scythians who invaded India in the 2nd century B.C. (150-140 B.C.).¹²²

Reference to Aśoka

Vaiśampāyana, while enumerating the names of ancient kings, who were born as the Asuras and Rākshasas, refers to king Aśva born in the form of king Aśoka, who was a great and violent hero.¹²³ Again, the name of king Aśoka has been referred to in connection with the names of those kings who had gone to Rājapura, the capital of the Kalinga country to attend the Svayamvara of the daughter of king Chitrāṅgadā.¹²⁴ It is certain that in our history there's no reference to Aśoka other than two Aśokas, Kālāśoka of the Śiśunāga dynasty, and Aśoka of the Mauryan dynasty. The epic does not refer to Kālāśoka but to Aśoka. For the time being, if we accept the former as Aśoka, then the epithets given by it are not applicable to him, on the other hand, they apply to Aśoka of the Mauryan dynasty. The visit by Aśoka to the Kalinga capital to marry the Kalinga princess seems to be allegorical to the conquest of that country by him. In his previous birth he has been regarded as born as an Asura. The parti-

• 121. Smith, V. A., EHI, p. 277, (Oxford, 1914).

122. Gode, P. K. Mounted bowmen on Indian battle field, BDCRI, Vol. 8, Pp. 41-42.

123. अशोको नाम राजासीन्महावीर्यः महापराक्रमः ।

Ādi. 61.14.

124. ŚP. 4.1-8.

cular reference to his name in past tense¹²⁵ (Aśokaṇām rājāsīt) shows that his name was interpolated into the epic much after his death because no one could dare to refer to him as an Asura in his previous birth during his life-time. The Brāhmaṇa compilers of the Mahābhārata found a suitable opportunity to refer to his name in connection with the names of kings, who were considered to be irreligious in their previous births. Aśoka also has been considered as an Asura in his previous birth on account of his anti-sacrificial activities.

The epic contains some very interesting verses¹²⁶ which refer to the reign of Aśoka. A critical study of the Ādiparva and the Aśoka edicts leaves us in no doubt that the particular chapter was composed during the Mauryan period. The compilers of the epic, while narrating the regency of Bhīshma over Dhṛitarāshṭra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura really describe the rule of Aśoka, which they witnessed during that period. Some verses are very significant as they refer to the propagation of Dharma by him in an indirect way. The word "Dharmachakra"¹²⁷ proves our point of view. These verses are allegorical to the reign of Aśoka, when really the wheel of the Dharma was set into motion for uplift of the people. Thus, it seems probable that these verses were added to the developing body of the Mahābhārata either during the reign of Aśoka or sometime later during the Mauryan period.

The question may be raised as to how is it possible for the epic to regard Aśoka as an Asura in his previous birth, and again to refer to his righteous rule? It may be explained in this way that it is the work by persons of different

125. Ādi. 61.14.

126. Ādi. 102.3-12.

127. स देशः परराष्ट्राणि प्रतिगृह्याभिर्वाधितः ।

भीष्मेण विहिते राष्ट्रं धर्मचक्रमवर्त्तत ॥

Ibid. 102.12.

अन्योऽन्यमभ्यवर्त्तन्त धर्मोत्तरमवर्त्तत ।

Ibid. 102.7.

tastes and mentality. The orthodox section of the Brāhmaṇas regarded him as an Asura, as he practised anti-Yajña activities, but, he had done much for the promotion of the welfare of the Beings and for the promotion of the elements of Dharma, therefore, it seems that the enlightened section of the Brāhmaṇas appreciated him, and referred to his rule as a model for describing the ideal regency of Bhishma on Dhritarāshtra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura.

Reference to Buddhism

Buddhism was a religion which denied the existence of God, the authority of the *Vedas*, the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas, and vehemently criticised the Varnaśrama organisations. The cult of Ahimsā was preached by the Buddha, and propagated by Aśoka on a large scale. The epic as an encyclopædia of knowledge contains many references to it. It seems quite probable that the relevant chapters were composed during the golden period of the propagation of the teachings of the Buddha during the Mauryan period or the succeeding ages.

The Buddhists did not follow the Varna and Āśrama rules but these institutions were the backbones of the Brāhmaṇical social organisation. The violation of the Āśrama rules has been criticised in the epic. It declares that after the termination of the Satyayuga, there would be countless Bhikshus and Liṅginah who would not follow the Āśrama rules and the rules of ancient Dharma, they would follow the opposite path, and such persons really are Dasyus in society who do not observe social rules.¹²⁸ This statement is directed against the Buddhists. In this connection, the word 'Bhikshavaḥ' is very remarkable. It is used generally for the

128.

असंख्याता भविष्यन्ति भिक्षवो लिङ्गिनस्तथा ।

आश्रमार्णा विकल्पाश्च निवृत्तेऽस्मिन्कृते युगे ॥

ŚP. 65.25.

Buddhist ascetics, and not for the Brāhmaṇa Saṁnyāsins. The complete eleventh chapter of the Śānti Parva is devoted to discredit the preachings of Buddhism against the Āśrama orders. It narrates the story of the Brāhmaṇa boys who had renounced their worldly life when they were not adults (Ajātaśmaśravo) and denounces them as fools (Mandāh).¹²⁹

The Nakula episode¹³⁰ apparently indicates the Buddhist influence on the Brāhmaṇical way of thinking. It points out that the performance of sacrifice is not the only means for achieving the heaven rather Śraddhā (non-hatred), truth, control of sense-organs and penance also help to obtain it. This episode has been explained in the Āśvamedhika Parva¹³¹ and it seems that this also was interpolated into the epic some time during the Mauryan period.

The Āśvamedhika Parva¹³² refers to a discussion between Indra and the sacrificial priests as to whether the sacrifice should be performed involving the slaughter of animals or with inanimate corn grains. Vasu, the Chedi king, who was the mediator gave the verdict that sacrifice should be performed with whatever material was available, but, for that he had to go down. The fact is that all the Varṇas could secure the heaven without performing animal sacrifice and by following the truth and offering Dāna.

The Āśvamedhika Parva¹³³ has vehemently criticised the performance of sacrifices involving animal sacrifice and has preached to follow Satya and Ahimsā in order to get the heaven.

Again, it criticises Himsā in sacrifices presenting the dis-

129. Ibid. 11.2.

130. Āśvamedhika, Chapters 92-93.

131. Ibid. Chapter 96th.

132. Ibid. Ch. 94th.

133. Āśvamedhika, Ch. 95.

course between a *Yati* and an *Adhvaryu*.¹³⁴ The *Kārtavīrya-Samudra-Saṁvāda*¹³⁵ gives emphasis on the cult of *Ahiṁsā*, which is the par excellence, and it further informs us that the persons engaged in *Himsā* go to the hell.¹³⁶ The epic presents a very interesting discussion¹³⁷ on the problem of interpretation of the word 'Aja' between sages and Gods, with which the sacrifice should be performed. It has been suggested that the term "Aja" does not stand for goat, but for corn, and so, goats should not be sacrificed in *Yajñas* as per Vedic injunction. This story also reveals the exact nature of the influence of *Ahiṁsā* cult on the minds of the *Brāhmaṇa* priests, when Buddhism was a dominant factor in the life of the Indians, and mostly during the Maurya-Śuṅga period or even some centuries later. With the spread of Buddhism in our country *stūpa* worship became very popular. The epic tells us that men in the decadent age of *Kali* will forsake their own Gods and worship the *Jālūka*, the earth will be dotted over with *Jālūka* monuments in place of the temples of Gods.¹³⁸ Sometimes there are references to the *Edūka*¹³⁹ also which mean *Stūpa* or something which is raised. The word *Jālūka* also stands for *Stūpa*, but it is a foreign word of semitic origin. It is derived from the word 'Ziggurat' the worshipable monuments in Mesopotamia. This word in Islamic culture still is known as *Ziarata* or tomb of the

134. Ibid. 28.5-28.

135. Ibid. Ch. 29.

136. Ibid. 49.2-4.

137. ŚP. Ch. 324.

138. *Āraṇyaka*. 190.65 and 67.

139. एहूकान्पूजायन्ति वर्जयिष्यन्ति देवताः ।
शुद्राः परिचरिष्यन्ति न द्विजान्युगसंक्षये ॥

Āraṇyaka. 188.64.

एहूकचिन्हा पृथिवी न देवगृहा भूषिता ।

Ibid. 188.66.

holy person.¹⁴⁰ The practice, as described in these ślokaś was prevailing during the reign of Aśoka who is credited with having built 84000 of stūpas and thus the earth was dotted over with them as referred to in the epic, therefore, it seems probable that this portion of the Āraṇyaka was added to it some time during the Maurya-Śuṅga period.

The word *Chaitya* also is an object of worship in Buddhism, but in the epic, it no where occurs in that sense. There are references to the *Chaitya*¹⁴¹ in the Mahābhārata, but they denote Chayana or brickpiles for the Vedic sacrifices. In the Chayana ritual, sacrificial ashes and utensils towards the end of the Yajña were piled up on a certain place fenced with walls of mud or stone or wood. The idea was that the things used in Yajña should not be defied from Yajñāyatana. In the epic, the *Chaitya* and *Yūpa* are grouped together. *Chaitya* was associated with the place where a vedic Yajña had been performed, so, the term *Chaitya* should not be taken in the sense of an object of Buddhist worship at least in the context as referred to in the epic, but other references show that some of its portions were composed either during the Maurya-Śuṅga period or the succeeding periods.

Political considerations

There are political references as well, which throw some light on the date of the Mahābhārata. The Rājaśāstrapraṇetāraḥ¹⁴² of the epic are the political thinkers in the Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra but it does not refer to other thinkers in the field of political science who existed after the 4th century B.C. It seems that the political thinkers other than them are late comers in the field of political science and existed

140. Agrawala, V. S. Some Foreign words in ancient Sanskrit Literature, IHQ, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 5.

141. ŚP. 29.18.

142. Infra, Chapter 3.

after the date of Kauṭilya but certainly before the advent of the Guptas, hence, on this basis also, the date of the relevant chapters in the *Śānti* and other Parvas may be fixed in between the 3rd century B.C. and the 3rd century A.D., and there should be no hesitation in accepting this date as other evidences also reveal the same fact regarding its date.

The Mahābhārata contains some technical administrative terms which are the same as referred to in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya such as Gopāla, Avipāla¹⁴³, Gosamkya,¹⁴⁴ Aṅka and Lakṣaṇa¹⁴⁵ which are common to both the sources.¹⁴⁶ The Nārada-Rājanīti¹⁴⁷ contains many technical terms which are the same as mentioned in the Arthaśāstra. The term Puruṣa is used for officers of state in the *Arthaśāstra* and in the edicts of Aśoka, and in the same sense, it has been used in the epic¹⁴⁸ also. On many administrative problems, the *Arthaśāstra* and the Mahābhārata express identical views, but the differences also are significant. It seems that the *Śānti Parva* had adopted many things from the *Arthaśāstra*. On this basis, its date appears to be the same i.e. the Maurya-Śuṅga-Kuṣāṇa Age.

The idea of the king's divinity, no doubt, is ancient and indigenous, but its development in the epic enables us to think that its compilers got inspiration from the idea of the king's divinity which prevailed during the Kuṣāṇa period.¹⁴⁹ So, it seems that specific portions of the epic, mostly in the *Śānti Parva* were composed and added to it either during the Kuṣāṇa period or during the early Gupta period.

The Mahābhārata refers to republican states mostly exist-

143. Virāṭa. 5.29.

144. Ibid. 9.4.

145. Āraṇyaka. 228.4, 229.4-6.

146. K.A. 2.29.

147. Sabhā. Ch. 5.

148. Infra. Chapter 12.

149. Infra, Chapter 5.

ing in western India.¹⁵⁰ The testimony of their existence is proved by the evidences supplied by Pāṇini and the Greek historians along with other writers. The archæological evidences also prove their existence at least up to the 4th A.D. and on this basis too, the date of the epic seems to be in between the 4th century B.C. and the early Gupta period, but the upper limit goes even up to the 5th century B.C.

Linguistic basis

The language and style of a book also go a long way in fixing its date, but this method is not so reliable, as it is difficult to find out the language and style of a particular period. However, the similarity of language and style of a particular book with the same adopted in other works indicates the contemporaneity of that book. In case with the Mahābhārata, there are many difficulties because different styles of language have been used in its composition.

The prose scattered in the epic resembles the same used in the *Upanishads* and *Brāhmaṇa* books. It seems that the *Bhārata* contained some prose sections in it which were its original parts. Its compilers retained some of these prose portions. Its style is archaic and may well be equated with the wordings and style in the Brāhmaṇic or the *Upanishadic* prose.¹⁵¹ It seems that the original *Bhārata* was composed

150. Infra, Chapter 6.

151. भृगुवै वारुणिः वरुणं पितरमुपससार अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मेति । तस्मा एतत्प्रोवाच । अन्नं प्राणं चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनो वार्चामिति । तद्होवाच । यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते येन जातानि जीयन्ति । यत्प्रचक्ष्यभि संविशन्ति । तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्ब्रह्मेति ।

Tai. Up, Bhṛguvalli, 1.

जनमेजयः पारिक्षतः सह भ्रातृभिः कुलक्षेत्रे दीर्घसत्रमुपास्ते । तस्य भ्रातरस्त्रयः श्रुतसेन-उग्रसेनो भीमसेन इति ॥१॥ तेषु तत्सत्रमुपासीतेषु तत्र आभ्यागच्छत्सारमेयः । स जनमेजयस्य भ्रातृभिरभिहितो रोक्ष्यमाणो मातुः समीपमुपागच्छत् ॥२॥ स माता रोक्ष्यमाणामुवाच । किं रोदिषि । केनास्यभिहत इति ॥३॥ स एवमुक्त्वो मातरं प्रत्युवाच । जनमेजयस्य भ्रातृभिरभिहतोऽस्मि इति ॥४॥ तं माता प्रत्युवाच । व्यक्तं त्वया तत्रापराद्धं येनास्यभिहत इति ॥५॥ स तं पुनरुवाच नापराध्याभि किञ्चित् । नावेक्षो हवींषि नावलह इति ॥६॥

Ādi. 3.1-6.

sometime during the age when the Brāhmaṇas were composed, and this possibility cannot be ruled out as the existence of the *Bhārata* and the *Mahābhārata* is seen during the middle of the 5th centuries B.C. also. These two editions of the epic during the 5th century B.C. clearly indicate that the original *Bhārata* was composed sometime earlier than the 5th century B.C. Hence the date of the prose portion may be solved, as generally the *Brāhmaṇa* books are considered to have been composed during the period from the 8th to the 5th century B.C.

Some verses also are archaic, and there are ample reasons to believe that some of its portions were composed before the date of Pāṇini i.e. the middle of the 5th century B.C. In the *Ādi*, *Āraṇyaka* and *Virāṭa Parvas* there are more than two hundred examples of the Un-Pāṇinian¹⁵² use of words. The language used in the epic indicates that it is not the composition by a single person within a particular year. The language of some of its parts is considerably older than others. It itself refers to different literary figures, namely *Vyāsa*, *Vaiśampāyana* and *Sauti* who composed and enlarged it. The prose in the *Ādi Parva*¹⁵³ which deals with the story of Janamejaya and Devaśūni seems to be much older than the prose in the *Āraṇyaka* and *Śānti Parvas*.¹⁵⁴ The prose style in these two Parvas is similar to the prose style of the classical Sāṃskṛita prevalent in the beginning of the Christian era, but in the *Ādi Parva* it is archaic, and on this basis, the upper limit of the epic may go up to the 5th century B.C. and the lower time-limit comes down to the 1st century A.D.

Some words also are very helpful to us in fixing the period of the evolution of the epic. In this connection, the word

152. Kulakarni, E. D., *Up-Pāṇinian Forms and Usage in the Critical Edition of the Mbh.*, ABORI, Vol. 24, Pts. 1-2, Pp. 83-97; Sila, H. C., *A Study of the Un-Pāṇinian Verb forms in the critical edition of the Ādi-Parva of the Mbh.*, IHQ, Vol. 36, No.1, Pp. 38-47.

153. *Ādi*. Chapters 3-4.

154. *Āraṇyaka*. Chapters 190-191; ŚP. 183.9-11.

Sahakāra supplies important information. In our literature, this word used for mango is not found before the Kushāṇa period. *Āmra* is a tree produced from the mango seed and *Sahakāra* by the technique of grafting, but this technique is a later invention. The word *Sahakāra*¹⁵⁵ is used only once in the epic. Its use in it raises an important problem. This word did not originate before the Kushāṇa period. The passage in which it occurs can not belong to the original epic. It enumerates *Sahakāra* in a list of trees of the Gandhamādana forest. It seems that this portion was added to the original *Bhārata* which was fast developing into the Mahābhārata sometime during the Gupta period when poetical description of this type (Varṇaka) began to be crystallised.¹⁵⁶

The epic refers to the Mlechchha-vāchā¹⁵⁷ in connection with the conversation between Yudhishtira and Vidura. The word *Mlechcha* is a generic term used for the foreigners, but the Persians are never designated as the Mlechchhas, so their language cannot be identified with the Mlechchha-Vāchā. The Greeks were regarded as the Mlechchhas, and this is proved by the testimony of Varāhamihira, though he belonged to the 5th or the 6th century A.D. The Greek language was studied by the Indians. Aśoka¹⁵⁸ had issued his commands in the Greek language in the Kandhār region, and many coins belonging to the period from the 2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. bear legends in Greek script and language. These are found in the present regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan which were ruled over by the Greeks during the period from the 2nd century B.C. to the

155. तथानङ्गशराकरान्सहकारान्मोनोरमान् ।
अपश्यन् भ्रमरावान्मञ्जरीभिर्विराजितान् ॥

Āraṇyaka. 155.60.

156. Agrawala, V. S., The Mbh., A Cultural Commentary, ABORI, Vol. 37, Pts. 1-4, Pp. 2-3.

157. Ādi. 135.6.

158. EW., Vol. 9, p. 192; Vol. 10, Pp. 243 ff.

beginning of the Christian era. The Greeks had also settled in the outskirts of Mathurā, hence, the cultivation of the Greek language in the Kuru country cannot be ruled out during this period. Though the script of the Greeks was known to the Indians even during the 5th century B.C. as is known from the *Ashṭādhyāyī*¹⁵⁹, it seems that the knowledge of the Greek language in the Kuru country could be possible only after the invasions by the Greco-Bactrians on that region, and after their settlement in the Kuru and Śūrasena countries. Though, the possibility of the knowledge of Greek language cannot be ruled out even during the 5th century B.C. but most probably the reference in the epic to the Mlechchha language indicates India's close relations with the Greeks. This was the period of the first two centuries before the Christian era, hence it seems to be the probable date for the composition or addition of the relevant chapters. Other foreigners like the Ābhīras also had their own language, but they never settled in the Kuru country as such the study of their language seems not to be probable.

The term *Horā*¹⁶⁰ is used in the epic. Originally it is a Greek word which means rising of a Zodiacal sign at a particular time or its resulting effect, but this meaning is inappropriate in the verse of the epic where in it has been used as an equivalent to the Greek Helios and signifies the Sun.

A perusal of all these internal evidences shows that the *Mahābhārata* was composed during so many centuries and the probable date, seems to be from the 5th century B.C. to the 3rd or the 4th century A.D. but its body was mostly enlarged during the Post-Mauryan periods.

External evidences

The external evidences also help us in fixing a probable date of the composition of the *Mahābhārata* which support

159. *Ashṭādhyāyī*. 4.1.49.

160. *Droṇa*, 16.34.

the date arrived at on the basis of the internal evidences, discussed above.

The statement of Dio Chrysostom

This traveller visited the Pāṇḍya country, and there he saw a voluminous book but he has not referred to its name. There is a statement by him that the Indians possessed and used a translation of Homer into their own language probably referring to the Mahābhārata. But it is not true, as there's no such translation of the said Greek epic. Weber and Pischel also support this view.¹⁶¹ If it was the Mahābhārata then it is apparent that even in the remote south the epic existed in the 1st century A.D.

Basis of the works of Aśvaghoṣa

Aśvaghoṣa, the court poet of Kanishka, in his work *Vajrasūchikopaniṣad*¹⁶², has quoted many verses which are found in the Mahābhārata. It seems that he cited them from it. His date is known to us i.e., the 1st century A.D. Thus, it is apparent that by that time, this epic had become a source book for citations.

Evidence of the Garuḍa pillar inscription of Heliodorus

This pillar inscription contains a statement that *Dama*, *Tyāga* and *Apramāda* are the three steps leading to immortality¹⁶³. The Mahābhārata also advances the same view in exactly the same wordings. This shows that Heliodorus had

161. Tarn, W. W., GBI, p. 379.

162. Gairola, Vachaspati, SSSI, p. 195.

163. त्रिणि अमुत पदानिइअसु अनुठितानिनेयति स्वर्गं दमचाग अप्रमाद ।
Sircar, D. C. Op.cit., p. 89.

दमस्त्यागोऽप्रमादश्चैतेष्यमतमाहितम् ।

Udyoga. 43.14 ; Stric. 7.19-20.

studied the epic. He was a *Bhāgavata* and hailed from Taksha-śilā, the place where for the first time it was recited. It was a popular scripture, hence he quoted this statement from it. The date of this inscription is controversial, but generally it is believed that it was inscribed during the last quarter of the 1st century B.C.¹⁶⁴ It is thus apparent that the Mahābhārata existed during that time.

Basis of the Purāṇas

The Mahābhārata and the *Purāṇas* contain many common stories and Ślokas. The *Matsya Purāṇa* and our epic contain the *Ākhyānas* of Yayāti¹⁶⁵ and Sāvitrī.¹⁶⁶ These are not the original parts of the epic, as these have no connection with its main theme. It seems that these were borrowed both by the *Matsya Purāṇa* and the epic from a 3rd source. There are many other stories and verses which are common to both the works and have verbal similarity or agreement¹⁶⁷ which may indicate either mutual borrowing or borrowing from a third source. However, they have some mutual borrowings. The epic refers to the *Matsya Purāṇa*,¹⁶⁸ and it seems probable that it

164. Choudhury, M. C. Besnagar Garuda Pillar Inscription of Heliodorus, VIJ, Vol. 2, Pt. 2, p. 337.

165. *Matsya-Purāṇa*, chapters 25-42; *Ādi*. chapters 71-88.

166. *Mbh.* *Āraṇyaka*. chapters, 277-283.

167. The story of the nomenclature of the Aṅga, Vāṅga, Puṇḍra, Sūmha and Kāliṅga countries after the names of the 5 sons of Bali begotten on his queen Sudeśṇā by the sage Dīrghatamas is common to the *Matsya Purāṇa* (Chapter 48.5, 24 ff.) and the *Mbh.*, (*Ādi*. 104.33ff.). The *Āraṇyaka* (80.31-38, 83.65-93) is the same in the *Matsya Purāṇa* (112.10-15, 104, 106 and 110 chapters respectively). The *ŚP.* (15.2, 15.5-6, 15.7-8) has verbal similarities with the *Matsya Purāṇa* (226.14-15, 226.15-15, 226.17) respectively.

168. इत्येतन्मात्स्यकं नाम पूराण परिकीर्तितम् ।

आख्यानमिदमाख्यातं सर्वपाप हरं मया ॥

Āraṇyaka. 185.53.

borrowed many verses from it during the period of its transformation from the Bhārata into the Mahābhārata. But the date of the present *Matsya Purāṇa* cannot be earlier than the early centuries of the Christian era, hence it may be the probable date of the portions containing these verses.

The Mahābhārata and the *Vāyu Purāṇa* also have many common verses and episodes. The traditional cosmography of the earth's seven Dvīpas as narrated in the *Bhīshma Parva* is also found in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*.¹⁶⁹ It is very difficult to ascertain as to which is the borrower. The epic was acquainted with the *Vāyu Purāṇa*¹⁷⁰ which was a popular and considerably an ancient *Purāṇa* and therefore, it appears that the former imitated or borrowed things from it during its developing period, i.e. the early centuries of the Christian era.

Many stories and stanzas are common to the *Mahābhārata* and the *Skanda Purāṇa*, having verbal similarities. The story of *Skanda*, 108 names of the Sun god,¹⁷¹ the story of *Chyavana* and *Sukanyā*, the *Ākhyāna* of the frog girl and considerable portion of the *Rāmopākhyāna*¹⁷² are common to both the works. The entire passage containing 108 names of the Sun God seems to be fairly old, and this *Purāṇa* refers to the fact that this list was proclaimed by Dhaumya to Pārth, and in this connection, it cites the *Āraṇyaka*.¹⁷³ This clearly shows that the *Skanda* version is a replica of the epic text. In connection with the story of frog-girl,¹⁷⁴ the word "Mandūka" as used in the epic has been replaced by the word "Dardura" in the *Skanda Purāṇa*. This also indicates the borrowing of this story by the *Purāṇa* substituting the easy word *Dardura* for

169. For detail see *Bhīshma Parva*, Introduction, cxlv.

170. एतत्ते सर्वमाख्यातमतीतानागतं मया ।
वायुप्रोक्तनुस्मृत्य पराणमपि संस्ततम् ॥

Āraṇyaka. 189.14.

171. Ibid. 3.18-28 ; *Skanda* 7.1.280.5-22.

172. *Āraṇyaka*. Chapters 258-275 ; *Skanda*. 5.2.84.

173. Ibid., 3.17.

174. Ibid. Ch. 190.

the archaic *Maṇḍūkā*. Narration of the Skanda-myth in the *Āraṇyaka Parva*¹⁷⁵ has many verbal similarities with the *Skanda Purāṇa*,¹⁷⁶ and there are at least 95 common śloka in both the works with a few variants. Besides these, there are many other stanzas which are common to both the works.¹⁷⁷ The *Skanda Purāṇa* is a late work of the Gupta period ; hence there is no question of borrowing by the epic from the former because much earlier than this, the latter had attained its present final form.

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* contains many stories and verses which are contained by the epic¹⁷⁸ also. The former is a work of the early Gupta period ; hence it was possible for it to borrow some verses from the latter.

The *Padma Purāṇa* contains many things which are found in the epic. The entire passage dealing with the *Tīrthas* and merit of visiting them,¹⁷⁹ the story of Agastya's drinking of the sea-water and stopping the growing Vindhya,¹⁸⁰ the stories of sages Rishyasṛiṅga¹⁸¹ and Aṇimāṇḍavya¹⁸² are common to both the works, and in most of these stories, there is verbal agreement. A critical study of the *Tīrthayātrā Parva* in the epic and of the same in the *Padma*, has enabled Belvalkar¹⁸³ to come to the conclusion that it was the latter which borrowed the *Tīrthayātrā* section from the former. In the epic, Nārada is narrator and Yudhisṭhira is listener ; but in the

175. Ibid. Chapters 213-224.

176. Skanda, Kumārikā Khaṇḍa, Chapters 29-32.

177. For details see *Āraṇyaka Parva*, critical notes.

178. The *Āraṇyaka* 186.65, ŚP. 29.132 & 134, 47.36 are found in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 6.3.31, 1.13.50 & 13.49, 2.8.101 respectively.

179. *Āraṇyaka*. Chapters 80-83 ; *Padma*, *Ādikhaṇḍa*, chapters, 10-39.

180. Ibid. chapter 98 ; *Padma*. 5.19.59-192.

181. Ibid. chapters 110-113 ; *Padma*, *Pātāla Khaṇḍa*, 13.

182. *Ādi*. 101.1-27 ; *Padma*. 5.48, 51ff.

183. Belvalkar, S. K. The cosmographical Episode in the *Mbh.* and the *Padmapurāṇa*, AVEIS, presented to F. W. Thomas, p. 27-28.

Padma, they are substituted by *Vaśishṭha* and *Dilipa* respectively. M. V. Vaidya¹⁸⁴ has advanced a different view, he thinks that even in the epic the *Tirthayātrā Parva* is not the original portion ; it is an interpolation. In short, he is of the view that the *Tirthayātrā* episode was originally of a floating nature, and was differently utilised by the *Agni*, *Vāmana* and *Padma Purāṇas*, and the *Mahābhārata*, but he thinks that the *Padma* version is directly copied from the northern recension of the epic.

The traditional cosmography as narrated in the *Bhīṣma Parva* resembles the same in the *Padma Purāṇa*. This problem has been studied well by W. Kirfel¹⁸⁵ and Hilgenberg¹⁸⁶ who hold that the epic account of the *Tirthas* is based on the version of the *Padma Purāṇa*. Prior to them, an Indian scholar V. Venkatachalam Iyer¹⁸⁷ had advanced the same view. The views of these scholars have been rightly refuted by S. K. Belvalkar on the grounds of grammatical variants, context, system of narration, and changes from the epic to the *Padma Purāṇa*. Besides this, the *Padma Purāṇa* omits the astronomical questions relating to the cosmography in the epic because these have no relation with the *Bhūmikhaṇḍa* in the *Padma*. In the epic, the account is confused and unsystematic ; but in the *Padma* it is systematic which was done after the original account in the former.¹⁸⁸

The above discussion shows that the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata* in many cases have verbal agreements and contain common stories. The religious literature was the preserve

184. Vaidya, M. V. *Tirthayātrā* in the *Āraṇyakaparva* and the *Padma Purāṇa*, AVSI, presented to P. V. Kane, Pp. 530-537.

185. Kirfel, W. *Die cosmographie der Inder* (1920), and *Bhārata-varṣa*, (1931).

186. Hilgenberg, "Die cosmographische episode in *Mbh.* and *Padma Purana* (1934).

187. Iyer, V. V. Notes on a study of the preliminary chapters of the *Mbh.*, Madras, (1922), Pp. 250-253.

188. Belvalkar, S. K., *op. cit.*, Pp. 19-25.

of priestly class, who added to both the works. It is, therefore, natural to expect contamination of the epic literature by the Paurāṇic and vice versa. It is difficult to decide regarding the common things as to their borrower and the source. It is admitted that the present form of the *Purāṇas* is of late date, and it may not be expected that the epic would have borrowed many of its materials from the present *Purāṇas*. Their compilers have drawn materials from the epic, and very likely, they might have drawn from a third common source also. The same thing is true of the Mahābhārata as well. The possibility of borrowing some material from the older editions of the *Purāṇas* cannot be ruled out.

The epic itself is well acquainted with the *Purāṇas* and the *Paurāṇic* traditions. It refers to the genealogy of Gods and devils as preserved in them.¹⁸⁹ The *Purāṇa* was taught to Dhṛitarāshṭra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura along with other subjects.¹⁹⁰ The priest of Janamejaya is referred to as having enumerated the methods of performing the Sarpasatra as described in the *Purāṇa*.¹⁹¹ The epic refers to a school of scholars who studied the *Purāṇas* (*Paurāṇikāḥ*).¹⁹² The *Purāṇas* were authentic works; hence it presents their authority along with the *Veda* and *Itihāsa* to prove the divine origin of the Brāhmaṇas.¹⁹³ Again, it is acquainted with the names and glories of Kṛishṇa as described in the *Purāṇas*.¹⁹⁴ Their authority has been cited to prove the same source of origin of Soma and Agni.¹⁹⁵ Besides these references, the Mahābhārata enumerates the names of two *Purāṇas* namely the Matsya and Vāyu, and the *Purāṇa* has been referred to¹⁹⁶ as a literature.

189. Ādi. 59.37.

190. Ibid. 102.18.

191. Ibid. 47.6.

192. Ibid. 47.7.

193. ŚP. 339.13.

194. Ibid. 328.68ff.

195. Ibid. 328.53.

196. Āraṇyaka. 185.53, 189.14 respectively.

These references show that the epic also has borrowed many things from the *Purāṇas*, but, did it borrow materials from their present recensions? These are of very late date, so, it seems likely, that these drawn upon by the epic were different from their present editions.

From ancient literary sources, it is apparent that the *Purāṇa* as a literature is very old. At least during the later Vedic period, *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* were regarded as the branches of knowledge, as the *Atharva-Veda*,¹⁹⁷ the *Chhândogya*¹⁹⁸ and the *Bṛihadāranyakopaniṣads*¹⁹⁹, and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*²⁰⁰ refer to them. From their general description, it is known that those were the works which contained ancient stories; but their exact nature and form are unknown to us. It seems that these were closely connected with each other, and contained historical, legendary and cosmological matters. The ancient works like the *Dharma-Sūtras* refer to the *Purāṇa* and quote verses from them; perhaps, this was the *Purāṇa* as mentioned by the *Upanishads* and the *Atharva-Veda*. It may also be assumed that in the beginning, there was one single work known as the *Itihāsa-Purāṇa*, and later, it was split into two different branches namely *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* as two independent works. *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*, as separate and independent works, seem to have later on developed into many *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*. The epic narrates many stories, opening with the line "Itihāsampurāṇam". It seems that most of the stories as preserved in the *Itihāsa* as a book were incorporated into the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Purāṇa* was expanded into many *Purāṇas* of the later days. The fact that several hundred verses occur in the epic as well as the *Purāṇas*, the *Dharma-*

197. AV. 15.1.6.12.

198. Chhândogya. 3.1.1-2, 7.1.2 & 4, 7.2.1, 7.7.1.

199. Bṛi. Up. 2.4.10, 4.1.2, 4.5.11.

200. Śat. Br. SBE, Vol. 44, Pp. 98, 369.

N.B. The references from the *Purāṇas* are from these editions: *Vāyu* (Bibliotheca Indica), *Matsya*, *Skanda* (Venkateshvar Press), Bombay, 1889, *Padma* (Anandashrama, Poona).

sūtras and the *Manusmṛiti* is to be explained by the fact that the same family of the Bhārgavas devoted to the cultivation of the *Itihāsa*, the *Purāṇa*, the Mahābhārata and the *Dharmaśāstra*.

It seems that the epic borrowed many things from ancient *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* during the period of its evolution from the 5th century B.C. to the 2nd and 3rd century A.D., and so did the *Purāṇas* during the period of their final editions in the Gupta age.

Basis of the Rāmāyaṇa

The *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Mahābhārata contain some common stories such as the Ākhyānas of Rāma²⁰¹, Nala²⁰², Ilvala²⁰³, Vātāpī and Rishyaśṛiṅga.²⁰⁴ This again presents the same problem.

Weber²⁰⁵ gave his attention to Rāmopākhyāna in the Mahābhārata, but could not come to any conclusion. Jacobi²⁰⁶ thinks that the Rāmopākhyāna in the *Āraṇyaka Parva* is based on the *Rāmāyaṇa*. V. S. Sukathankar²⁰⁷ has pointed out 86 examples of verbal agreements between the two.

The Nala episode in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Mahābhārata have close resemblance and there are at least 18 verses which

201. *Āraṇyaka*. Chapters, 258-275.

202. *Ibid.* Chapters, 50-65, *Rāmāyaṇa* (N.S.), *Sundarakāṇḍa*, Chapters 18-21.

203. *Ibid.* Chapter 94, Rāma, 3.11.54-66 (N.S.).

204. *Ibid.* Chapters, 110-113, Rāma, *Bālakāṇḍa*, Chapters, 8-10 (N.S.).

205. Weber, *Über Das Rāmāyaṇa*, *Abhandlungen der Berliner Akad der wiss, Philhist, Klasse*, 1870.

206. Jacobi, *Das Ramayana*, Bonn, 1893.

207. Sukathankar, V. S., *Epic Studies*, 8, The Rama Episode, AVSI presented to P. V. Kane, Pp. 476-486.

are common to both the epics.²⁰⁸ In the Mahābhārata, the pacifying ślokaś to Damayantī have been borrowed from the *Rāmāyaṇa* which are the same to Sitā by Hanumāna.²⁰⁹ The Kachchita chapter in the *Sabhā Parva*²¹⁰ is written in close imitation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.^{210a}

All these references show a close relationship existing between the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Mahābhārata. Jacobi has remarked that prior to the final composition of the Mahābhārata, the *Rāmāyaṇa* existed already as a popular work. It has been admitted that the Mahābhārata makes an archaic impression, hence some scholars regard it as older than the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This paradox has been solved by Winternitz²¹¹ who thinks that the period of the composition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* falls within the much longer period of the evolution of the Mahābhārata. Therefore, it may be suggested that the former was composed in the interval which separated that *Bhārata* from the Mahābhārata. Generally, the date of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is supposed to be the period from the 2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. It would then be admitted that the Mahābhārata existed during this period, but was in its developing form.

Parallelism between the Mahābhārata and Manusmṛiti

There are about 260 stanzas of the *Manusmṛiti*, that is nearly²¹² 10% of the total, which are found in the epic. This indicates close relationship between the two works. The

208. Sukthankar, V. S. The Nala Episode and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, AVESI, presented to F. W. Thomas, Pp. 294-303.

N.B. References from the *Rāmāyaṇa* are from the Gita Press, edition unless otherwise specified.

209. *Āraṇyaka*, 68.8ff., *Rāma*, *Sundarakāṇḍa*, Chapters, 18, 19, 21, 29.

210. *Sabhā*, 5.

210a. VR. *Ayodhyā*, Ch. 100.

211. Winternitz, HIL., p. 505.

212. Buhler, *The Laws of Manu*, SBE, 25, p. LXXX.

views of Manu are quoted many times in the Mahābhārata. The compilers of both the works were the Bhārgavas who transformed the Bhārata into the Mahābhārata and gave final shape to the present *Manusmṛiti*. It is also to be remembered that according to the *Manusmṛiti* itself, it is the law-book communicated to the mankind, and is also regarded as the *Bhṛigusamhitā*. It seems that the common stanzas were added to both the works by common composers—the Bhārgavas, who were versed in Nīti and Dharma.

Generally, it is believed that *Manusmṛiti* was composed during the 2nd century B.C. but was finalised during the beginning of the Christian era. This comes within the developing period of the *Bhārata* into the Mahābhārata.

Evidence of the Mahābhāshya

There are certain verses in the *Mahābhāshya* which are common to the epic.²¹³ As a book on grammar, there is no question of the philosophical śloka originally to be found in it, hence, it seems that the epic constituted source book to it. It mentions the dramas composed on the theme belonging to the life-sketch of Kṛishṇa,²¹⁴ and probably those were based on the facts mentioned in the Mahābhārata. It shows that the epic was a source book to the writers of the 2nd century B.C. also.

Evidence of the Milindapanho

A verse in the Śānti Parva²¹⁵ is almost in the same context which is found in the *Milindapanho*²¹⁶ and to some extent in

213. Anuśāsana (C.P.) 104.64-65, 121.7, 104.82 are common to the Mahābhāshya, Vol. 3rd, p. 58, Vol. 2, p. 373, Vol. 1, p. 457 respectively.

214. Patañjali on Pāṇini, 3.1.26.

215. ŚP. 9.25.

216. *Milindapanho*, 9.25, (Treckner, p. 383).

the Jain *Āvaśyakasūtra*.²¹⁷ It seems that it was a floating idea and the three religions utilised it for their own purposes. The date of the *Milindapanho* is supposed to be the second century B.C., therefore, it is possible that the epic during its developing period borrowed it from the floating idea or from the *Milindapanho*. Whatever may be the reason, it is almost certain that during the 2nd century B.C. this idea was very popular and the epic might have adopted or borrowed it during or before the 2nd century B.C.

Evidence supplied by the Āśvalāyana Gṛihyasūtra

In a passage of the *Āśvalāyana Gṛihyasūtra* the four disciples of Vyāsa namely, Sumantu, Jaiminī, Vaiśampāyana and Paila, and *Bhārata* as well as the *Mahābhārata* are referred to.²¹⁸ The epic also refers to these pupils of Vyāsa who had studied it from him and had composed their own *Bhāratas*²¹⁹ but those editions are not available to us. The reference to the *Bhārata* and the *Mahābhārata* in this *Gṛihyasūtra*, clearly proves that there existed two recensions of the epic. Scholars, after examining the particular passage, have come to the conclusion that the mention of the *Bhārata* and the *Mahābhārata* is textually genuine and justified on other important considerations.²²⁰ The *Bhārata* of 24000 ślokas, it seems, was in existence even during 4th or the 3rd century B.C. or earlier as it is the probable date of the *Gṛihyasūtra* referring to them. So, the earlier period is to be supposed for the probable date of the *Bhārata*. As *Āśvalāyana* was the direct disciple of Śaunaka, it was but natural for him to refer to the

217. *Āvaśyakasūtra*. Adhyāya, 5.

218. सुमन्तु जैमिनि वैशम्पायन पौल सूत्रभाष्य भारत महाभारत धर्माचार्याः जानन्ति ।
ĀGS, 3.4.4.

219. Ādi. 57.74-75.

220. Utagikar, Mbh. in the *Āśvalāyana Gṛihyasūtra*, Proc. 1st Oriental Conference, Vol. 2nd, p. 60.

Bhārata and the *Mahābhārata* as the *Bhārgavas* were the editors and they were developing the former into the *latter*.

The statement by Kātyāyana

Pāṇini informs that during his time there existed the *Ākhyāna*²²¹ literature, and Kātyāyana, while citing example, refers to the *Yāyāta*. It consisted of two parts, namely the *Pūrva-Yāyāta* and *Uttara-Yāyāta*.²²² Further, the date of Kātyāyana being the 4th century B.C. it may be supposed that the *Yāyāta* existed sometime about that period. At present, the *Yāyāta* is not available in an independent form. It seems that during or after the 4th century B.C. it was included in the *Bhārata* which was developing into the *Mahābhārata*. The *Pūrva-Yāyāta* may be known from chapters 70-80, and the *Uttara-Yāyāta*²²³ from chapters 81-88 in the *Ādiparva* of the epic. The same work was included in the *Matsya-purāṇa* as well, and it is the *Yāyāta* from which *Baudhāyana*²²⁴ quotes a verse. It seems that the chapters 70-88 in the *Ādiparva* were not the original part of the epic and were added to it sometime after the 4th century B.C.

Evidence of Pāṇini

Pāṇini refers to many of the heroes of the epic such as Vāsudeva, Arjuna²²⁵ and Yudhishṭhira.²²⁶ He refers to the *Bhārata* and the *Mahābhārata* as well.²²⁷ It clearly indicates that during the life-time of Pāṇini there existed two recensions

221. *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 6.2.103.

222. Kātyāyana, quoted by V. S. Agrawala, op.cit., Pp. 306, 316, 339.

223. *Ādi*. 81.9.

224. BDS. 2.2.90. *Ādi*. 78.10.

225. *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 4.3.98.

226. *Ibid*. 8.3.95.

227. *Ibid*. 6.2.38.

of the epic. Though his date is a matter of controversy, yet the latest researchers have proved that he existed in the middle of the 5th century²²⁸ B.C. which was the developing period of the epic. It may, therefore, be assumed that the *Bhārata* was composed much earlier than the 5th century B.C. but it is difficult to give an exact date.

It may be questioned as to how it was possible that the two editions of the same book existed at the same time and why the original *Bhārata* is not available. This can be explained by the fact that even at present there are many editions of the same book in pocket size, abridged and enlarged forms; there is nothing surprising if the *Bhārata* existed in the form of two editions. The *Bhārata* was developed into the Mahābhārata. The former was the original short work mainly based on the battle scenes and was not so attractive, hence it lost its charm, and the people finding it useless did not attempt to retain it. Moreover, in the Mahābhārata they got the original *Bhārata* besides many additional attractions. For some time; the two recensions continued. This may be explained in the same way as in the case of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Originally, it consisted of 60 chapters only, but later on developed into 100 chapters. Even by the 2nd century B.C., the original work of 60 chapters existed in an independent form, and was known as the *Shasṭīpatha*, and the readers of this version were known as the *Shasṭīpathikas* as Patañjali²²⁹ informs us. The readers of the enlarged *Śatapatha Br.* were known as the *Śatapathikas*. Likewise, the *Bhārata* and the Mahābhārata also existed for some time as independent works, but later on, were amalgamated into one, and the composite and the developed form of the *Bhārata*, known as the Mahābhārata, continued.

228. Agrawala, V.S. IKP., Pp. 455-475.

229. Mahābhāshya. 2.228.

Basis of the Dharmasūtras

Some verses are common to the Mahābhārata and some of the prominent *Dharmasūtras* like those of Gautama, Āpastamba, Baudhāyana and Vāśiṣṭha.²³⁰ There may be three possibilities, the *Dharmasūtras* borrowed those verses from the epic or vice versa or both borrowed from a third independent source which seems quite reasonable. Perhaps, the ancient *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* were quoted by the *Dharmasūtrakāras* and the writers of the epic, which later on were either absorbed into the epic or were developed into independent *Purāṇas*. It is difficult to say when the epic borrowed them. The *Śaṁkha-Likhita Dharma sūtra*²³¹ refers to the *Bhārata* along with other scriptures but does not mention the Mahābhārata. Perhaps ; by this time ; it did not exist. But, in the 5th century B.C. we find the existence of the *Bhārata* and the Mahābhārata. So, if it is suggested that the *Bhārata* began to develop into the Mahābhārata prior to the 5th century B.C. then it may well be assumed that it existed at least in the 6th century B.C. and the *Dharmasūtras* along with the developing *Bhārata* borrowed independently from the floating oral or written works. The antiquity of the *Dharma sūtras* goes back to the 6th century B.C. also and by the time of Pāṇini²³² in the 5th century B.C. those were developed as an independent branch of study inside the Charaṇas, the Institutes for the Vedic Studies.

Basis of the Jātakas

The *Jātakas* contain some stories which are common to

230. For such references see Kane, P. V. The Mbh. verses and very ancient Dharmasūtras and other works, AVEIS, presented to F. W. Thomas, Pp. 128-133.

231. SLDS. (Edited by P. V. Kane), p. 116.

232. Aṣṭādhyāyī, Op.cit. 4.2.46. See also Agrawala, V. S. IKP, p. 133.

the epic. The *Ghaṭa Jātaka*²³³ narrates the story of Kṛishṇa in a distorted form and refers to Kṛishṇa-Dvaipāyana. The *Kanha-Dvaipāyana Jātaka*²³⁴ presents his life-sketch and describes the story of sage *Aṇimāṇḍavya*²³⁵, whose story is common to the epic also. The story of sage *Rishyaśṛiṅga* as preserved in the epic is narrated in the *Nalinika* and *Alambusā Jātakas*.²³⁶ The *Vighāsa Jātaka*²³⁷, as a whole, contains similar story as narrated in the epic²³⁸, but there are some differences also. The *Brāhmaṇa* boys in the epic have been referred to as having observed celibacy, but in the *Jātaka* the Seven brothers have been regarded as false ascetics. A verse of the epic is found in the *Mahā-Janaka Jātaka* in which it has been mentioned that queen Śivālī burnt some barracks in the Mithilā-city and reported to the king who had no wordly attachment to anyone or any thing.²³⁹

A verse in the Śānti Parva is found with some difference in the Mahāvagga regarding the vision of the *Prajña-Prāsāda* by the unwise ones.²⁴⁰ Some verses of the epic are close to the *Jātaka Gāthās*²⁴¹ as regards the dialogue between Brahmadata and the *Pūjanī* bird. A verse of the *Śānti-parva* is found in the *Jātaka* but the *Gāthā* in that book does not convey the important spiritual reflection of Piṅgalā concerning the self within.²⁴² The Śāntiparva presents a dialogue between the father and the son, some analogous sentiments of which are found in a *Jātaka*.²⁴³ The central framework of the story is common

233. Jātaka No. 454.

234. Ibid. No. 444.

235. Ādi. 57.77-81, 101.1-27; Āśrama. 35.12-14.

236. Āraṇyaka, chapters, 110-113; Jātaka Nos. 326 & 523.

237. Jātaka, No. 393.

238. Śp. Ch. 11.

239. Ibid. 17.18.

240. Ibid. 17.19; Mahāvagga. 1.5.7.

241. Ibid. 137.30-33.

242. Ibid. 168.52; Jātaka No. 330.

243. Ibid. Ch. 169; Jātaka No. 509, Gāthā No. 4.

to the Śāntiparva and the *Jātaka*, and similar references are noticed in the Jaina *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra* also.

All these references show that many of the stories and *Gāthās* are common to the *Jātakas* and the epic, and it can not be said with certainty as to who borrowed from whom. The *Jātaka* stories are related to the previous births of the Buddha but their compilers utilised old floating stories to serve their purpose, and to a little extent, distorted them, hence the differences. The *Jātakas* were finally compiled during the third century²⁴⁴ B.C. and further additions may not be ruled out. During this long span of time from the 6th to the 3rd century B.C., the compilers of the *Jātakas* borrowed many floating stories, and it seems that the compilers of the developing *Bhārata* also did the same, but according to its set up and needs. The *Bhārata* also existed during the 5th century B.C. or earlier than this, but developed by assimilating other floating *Ākhyānas* which had no concern with its main theme.

Basis of the Brāhmaṇas and the Upanishads

The *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upanishads* refer to the names of some of the persons who have been mentioned in the epic. The *Śat. Br.*²⁴⁵ refers to Janamejaya, Bhīmasena, Ugrasena and Śrutasena, the four sons of king Parikṣhita as referred to in the epic.²⁴⁶ Devakiputra Kṛiṣṇa²⁴⁷ is referred to as the disciple of sage Ghora Āṅgiras, and king Parikṣhita²⁴⁸ also is known to the *Upanishads*. Generally, it is assumed that the probable date of these works should be the period from the

244. The name of Śramaṇa Mahendra ; the son of Aśoka is found in the *Jātaka*, *Durenidana*, 3.

245. *Śat. Br.* 13.5.4.

246. *Ādi.* 3.1 ff.

247. *Chhānd. Up.* 3.17.6.

248. *Bṛi. Up.* 3.1.3.

8th century B.C. to the 6th or the 5th century B.C. Prior to this, we have no references to the epic heroes. Vyāsa is not a seer of the Mantras but an editor. So, on the basis of these references it is apparent that the heroes of the epic are as ancient as the *Brāhamaṇas* and the *Upanishads*, and their antiquity may be pushed back to one or two centuries earlier. But, these do not refer to the *Bhārata* or the *Mahābhārata*. It seems that the epic was composed much after their composition. During the 5th century B.C. the existence of the *Bhārata* and the *Mahābhārata* is proved ; therefore, it seems that the former was composed before the 5th century B.C. and we would be justified if we suppose that the original *Bhārata* was composed during the 6th century B.C. which is its upper most time-limit.

A perusal of the foregoing references and evidences help us in fixing the probable date of the present *Mahābhārata*. The upper-limit may be supposed to be the 6th century B.C. and the lowest to be the 3rd century A.D. but a few interpolations were made during the 4th century A.D. also. Most of the references show that the epic *Bhārata* was transformed into the *Mahābhārata* during a long span of time at least from the 6th century B.C. to the 3rd or the 4th century A.D. but the process of development was in full force during the Maurya-Śuṅga periods. Its Śatasāhasrī form was complete by the 5th century A.D. as in this form it was widely known to the people. The earliest epigraphic evidence of the completion of the epic as the Śatasāhasrī Saṁhitā is of the Gupta Samvata 214 (533 A.D.) as recorded in the Khoha inscription of King Śarvanātha.²⁴⁹

249. उक्तञ्च महाभारते शतसाहस्रयां संहितायां परमर्षिणा पराशरसुतेन वेदव्यासेन व्यासेन, For details see Agrawala, Jagannath, Tāmra Śāsana me Mahābhārata ke Ullekha, Viśva Jyoti, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 27.

Chapter II

DANḌANĪTI

The Mahābhārata refers to different terms for the science of Govt. which technically is known as Danḍanīti. A persual of these reveals significant meanings which show the gradual development of this science for centuries during which the epic was composed.

Usually it refers to the term Rājadharmā¹ for the science of Govt. Rājā means the king ; and Dharma stands for his duties and responsibilities to the people and the state. Hence, the science dealing with the king's duties is rightly termed as the Rājadharmā. It is also known as Rājāsāstra² which is more appropriate than Rājadharmā, as it denotes only the king's duties but the former includes all aspects of the state. In the Śāntiparva ; there is a separate section on Rājadharmā which mainly deals with the duties and responsibilities of kings. The epic refers to the pioneers in the field of Rājāsāstra like Brihaspati, Viśālāksha, Uśanā, Sahasrāksha Mahendra, Prāchetas Manu, Bhāradvāja and Gaurśirā, and styles them as the Rājāsāstrapraṇetārah.³ Āśvaghoshā⁴ also refers to Rājāsāstra and the Rājāsāstrapraṇetārah. Sometimes Rājāsāstra is substituted by Kshatradharma⁵, which

1. Udyoga. 20.3 ; Anuśāsana. 47.1 ; Strī, 12.2 ; Āśrama. 43.2 ; ŚP. 38.1.166.5, 13. The ŚP. frequently uses this term for the science of Govt.

2. ŚP. 58.2-3, 63.16, 99.7.

3. विशालाक्षश्च भगवान्काव्यश्चैव महातपाः ।

सहस्राक्षो महेन्द्रश्च तथा प्राचेतसो मनुः ॥

भरद्वाजश्च भगवांस्तथा गौरशिरा मुनिः ।

राजशास्त्रप्रणेतारो ब्रह्मण्या ब्रह्मवादिनः ॥

ŚP. 58.2-3.

4. Buddhacharitam, 1.46.

5. ŚP. 63.26, 64.9, 20.

may be equated with Kshatravidyā⁶ enumerated as a branch of Vidyā in the *Chhāndyogyopanishad*. It seems that during the later vedic period, the science of Govt. was studied as a separate branch of learning, and this probability cannot be ruled out as by the 4th century B.C. there existed a separate school of the *Arthaśāstra* but many quotations in the *Kautilya's Arthaśāstra* clearly prove the cultivation of this branch of learning for many centuries preceding him.

The term Daṇḍanīti⁷ also is usually used for the science of Govt. and it has been asserted that the happiness and prosperity of people depend upon its proper utilisation by the king.⁸ The epic asserts that the science of Govt. is called Daṇḍanīti because the world is led on to the right path by Daṇḍa, the power of punishment, and this science carries or sets forth the rod of punishment; hence, Daṇḍanīti.⁹ This word consists of two parts, Daṇḍa and Nīti, the former is used in many senses, but generally, it stands for punishment, and denotes a staff that was meant to ward off demons who came to disturb the sacrificial performance or for driving away cattle. The latter part means the science of guidance, that which leads or guides, hence rightly termed as the science of government controlling the evil doers, and guiding the people to the right path. Daṇḍanīti controls the four Varnas, prevents them from following bad path and engages them in their respective duties.¹⁰ Though, it is identified with Rājadharmā¹¹, yet it is not only the science of punishment and government. It is the means with which the unacquired is acquired and protected well.¹² Kautilya also

6. Chhāndogya, 7.1.2.

7. Āraṇyaka, 1.4.9.3; 198.23; ŚP. 63.28; 64.7; 65.24; 70.1-4.

8. Udyoga. 130.12-13; ŚP. 25.29; 26.32; 63.28.

9. ŚP. 59.78.

10. Ibid. 70.3.

11. Ibid. 63.28.

12. Ibid. 70.29.

advances the same view.¹³ In the epic, other names for Daṇḍanīti are Brahmakanyā as it is originated by Brahmā, Lakshmi ; as it causes prosperity to the people, Vṛitti, because it is the means of livelihood to them, Sarasvatī ; as it causes the promotion of Vidyās, and Jagaddhātṛī ; because it supports the world.¹⁴

The Mahābhārata refers to the word *Arthaśāstra* for the science of Govt.¹⁵ It is known as *Arthavibhāga*¹⁶. Yudhishṭhira and Arjuna have been referred to as having thorough grounding in this subject.¹⁷ It is styled as *Arthavidyā* also.¹⁸ The epic refers to the *Arthaśāstra* composed by Bṛihaspati and others¹⁹, and to the *Arthavidyā* of Manu.²⁰ It has been said that a king whose whole concern is with the *Arthaśāstra* does not secure the Dharma and Kāma, and his prosperity vanishes in improper objects.²¹ The epic does not define *Arthaśāstra*, but Kauṭilya gives a clue to understand its meaning, as in his view it is the science which deals with the means of acquiring and maintaining the earth.²² It, thus, includes within its perview the army-organisation, methods and principles of war, diplomacy, socio-economic and religious activities, civil and judicial administration and so on. This basically treats political problems, and the economic problems occupy a very subordinate place in the scheme of investigation and discussions of the *Arthaśāstra*.

The science of Govt. is known as *Rājaśāstra*²³ or *Rājanīti*-

13. K.A. 1.3.

14. ŚP. 121.23.

15. Ibid. 52.5, 86.29, 161.9.

16. Āraṇyaka. 158.13.

17. Ibid. 159.17.

18. ŚP., 140.11.

19. Anuśāsana. 39.8-9.

20. Droṇa. 5.34.

21. ŚP. 72.13-14.

22. K.A. 1. Vinayādhikārikam.

23. Ādi. 102.17 ; Āśvamedhika. 65.24 ; ŚP. 59.74, 64.6, 120.2, 136.39, 259.9.

śāstra²⁴, and these two frequently occur in the epic. It defines Nitiśāstra as the means where by the people are prevented from deviating from the right path.²⁵ Thus, it is synonymous with the term Daṇḍanīti, because it also punishes those who deviate themselves from the right path. This Śāstra is related to king because he regulates and utilises the injunctions of the Śāstra to correct the people in order to keep them on the right path; hence, it is Rājanītiśāstra. The word Rājanīti is a compound made up of two words Rāja and Niti, and these contain significant meanings. The word Rājan is derived from two roots, Rañja which means to please and Rājṛ, to shine, by affixing Kanin, so Rājā is one who pleases and wins the hearts of people, one who shines or is attractive. He is a brilliant person who pleases the people by fulfilling their needs. The word Niti is derived from the root Nī which means to carry, to lead, to guide, or to direct and govern, that which leads to the objectives and is a means to the achievement of purpose. Rājanīti, therefore, is the set of principles which govern and direct the head of the state, and by means of which a charming person, at the helm of affairs realises his objectives of pleasing the people, and winning their heart. It is the basis of a state which stands for the welfare of people, and its aim is to have treasury and army in order to ensure prosperity at home, and protection from external aggressions in a way which does not kill popular enthusiasm and does not demoralise the people, but inspires greater enthusiasm for freedom of state and raises morale.²⁶

Antiquity of the tradition of Daṇḍanīti

It is difficult to find out the exact date of the beginning

24. ŚP. 38.9.

25. Ibid. 59.74.

26. Pandeya, K. C. Rājanīti or Politics, IA (3rd Series), Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 103.

of the composition of treatises on the science of Govt. The epic regards Brahmā as the first writer on Daṇḍanīti, but, He is purely a mythological Being having no existence in history. It is asserted that His Code consisted of one lakh of sections, and later on, was abridged by Śiva Viśālākṣha, Bāhudantīputra, Bṛihaspati and Uśanā in ten, five, three and one thousand sections, respectively.²⁷ This account indicates that prior to or during the compositional period of the epic attempts were made to compose treatises on the science of government. Besides this, Rājaśāstrapaṇetāraḥ as referred to in the epic are quoted by Kauṭilya in his *Arthaśāstra*. So, it is apparent that the writers on the science of Govt. as mentioned in the Mahābhārata are not mythological, but were historical persons, who had composed treatises on Daṇḍanīti, which were widely studied. Kauṭilya also utilised those works for the composition of his monumental work, the *Arthaśāstra*. So, it seems that at least by the 5th century B.C. Daṇḍanīti constituted an independent branch of learning. It is the lowest time limit for its existence, but this date may be pushed back to the sixth or seventh century B.C. because it required a considerable period of time for the formulation and development of political thoughts.

Origin of Daṇḍanīti

It may now be asked as to what necessitated the origin of Daṇḍanīti. The epic asserts that Brahmā composed the Dharmatantrāṇī²⁸—treatises on Dharma, with a purpose to guide the people to the right path.²⁹ The same thing is revealed from a story of the composition of a comprehensive work by Chitraśikhāṇḍinaḥ, viz. a group of seven sages namely Marīchi, Atri, Aṅgirā, Pulstya, Pulah, Kratu and

27. ŚP. 59.29, 86-91.

28. Āraṇyaka. 181.11.

29. Anuśāsana. 129.4-5.

Vaśishṭha.³⁰ The purpose of their work was to regulate the Lokadharmā as they composed this Śāstra thinking that it would cause prosperity to society and help people realise supreme peace.³¹ That work was not devoted only to Dharma but to other aspects of human life also. It consisted of the Maryādā or limits to regulate all these aspects of human life.³² This work was inspired by the divine agency³³ and was authentic like the *Vedas*.³⁴ Later, that became the source book to the works of Manu, Śukra and Bṛihaspati, a fact which is preserved in the epic.³⁵ Thus, it seems that Manu, Śukra and Bṛihaspati were not pioneers in the field of Daṇḍanīti. But, it is strange that the Mahābhārata does not refer to the Chitraśikhāṇḍinaḥ as the Rājaśāstrapraṇetārāḥ. It may be explained in this way that the work by them was not a treatise composed purely on Daṇḍanīti, but was a book on many aspects of human life, and as such, the compilers of the epic have not referred to them. Manu, Śukra, Bṛihaspati and others were probably the first persons to separate Daṇḍanīti from the general body of learning and are consequently regarded as the pioneers in this field.

Furthermore, the epic throws considerable light on the circumstances leading to the origin of Daṇḍanīti, and side by side, refers to the purpose of the composition of treatises on it. It refers to the remote past when the people realised happiness and did not suffer, but that state of affairs did not exist for a long time. With the emergence of socio-economic institutions, many new problems came into being, and there was no government to control the anti-social elements. The people began to encroach on each others' interest, hence there was a state of complete anarchy in society. Terrified, the Gods

30. ŚP. 322.27.

31. Ibid. 322.26-28.

32. Ibid. 322.30.

33. Ibid. 322.31-33.

34. Ibid. 322.33-38.

35. Ibid. 322.41-44.

went to Brahmā to request Him to establish law and order in society.³⁶ He, on their request, composed a code of conduct.³⁷ It has been asserted that Kshatradharma is originated by Brahmā in order to engage the people in their duties and to prevent them from following the bad path.³⁸ The compilers of the epic thought it better to attribute its origin to the divine agency to make the laws of Daṇḍanīti authentic, so that the people may not hesitate to follow them.

There is yet another tradition preserved in the epic. It recalls a remote history when Daṇḍa disappeared resulting in lawlessness, when the people discarded their duties and did not discriminate between right and wrong. They began to kill each other, did not protect the sanctity of women's chastity, and no one's life and property were safe.³⁹ Seeing this deplorable condition of the world, Brahmā requested Śiva to show His compassion on the world, and the latter transformed Himself into Daṇḍa⁴⁰—the sanction to govern the world. The Goddess Sarasvatī considering it as a means to protect the Dharma and regulate the human-life, created Daṇḍanīti⁴¹ which deals with of the means with which the un-acquired is acquired, the acquired one is guarded well, and the guarded one is distributed well. Here also, the divine origin of Daṇḍanīti has been referred to.

Comparison with other Śāstras

In order to acquaint ourselves with the importance of Daṇḍanīti, it is necessary to compare it with other branches of knowledge. The epic furnishes some information regarding this matter, but these are not so comprehensive as in the

36. ŚP. 59.14-27.

37. Ibid. 49.29-29.

38. Ibid. 64.20, 65.30.

39. Ibid. 122.19-21.

40. Ibid. 122.22-24.

41. Ibid. 122.25.

Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya. Like the *Arthaśāstra*, our epic also refers to the four Vidyās namely the triple *Vedas*, Ānvikshiki (Logic), Vārtā or the means of subsistence viz., agriculture, animal husbandry, trade and commerce, and lastly the Daṇḍanīti or the science of Govt.⁴² Again, it refers to three Vidyās namely the triple *Vedas*, Vārtā and Daṇḍanīti.⁴³ These Vidyās have been attributed to the school of Manu by Kauṭilya.⁴⁴ While discussing their comparative importance the epic gives equal importance to all of them, and asserts that being properly cultivated these cause prosperity to the human society⁴⁵ but Daṇḍanīti has been regarded as of some superior importance to others, as law and order cannot be maintained without its help, so, for the people's welfare it is essential to utilise Daṇḍanīti along with the cultivation of Trayī and Vārtā. The other two branches of knowledge also are important because without following the Vedic injunctions there cannot be order in society⁴⁶, but without the Vārtā, the human society would perish very soon. Hence, all the Vidyās are equally important for the maintenance of society.⁴⁷ The epic furnishes references to the importance of Daṇḍanīti than to the Trayī and Vārtā, and concludes that it is Mahāśraya (The Great-shelter) and Bahukalyāṇarūpā⁴⁸ (Embodiment of welfare in many forms). It asserts that all Dharmas are the limbs of Kṣhātradharmā, hence it is the best Dharma.⁴⁹ Though, it narrates the importance of the Trayī and Vārtā at many places, but not in a way to compare them with

42. Ibid. 59.33. Kauṭilya also refers to the Four types of the Vidyās (K.A. 1.1).

43. Āraṇyaka. 149.31.

44. K.A. 1.1.

45. त्रयी वार्ता दण्डनीतिस्तस्मै विद्या विज्ञानताम् ।

ताभिः सम्यक्प्रयुक्ताभिलोकयात्रा विधीयते ॥

Āraṇyaka. 149.31.

46. Ibid. 149.32.

47. Ibid. 149.30, 32.

48. ŚP. 63.26-30.

49. Ibid. 64.20-21.

Danḍanīti. Kauṭilya⁵⁰ deals with this problem in detail, but such treatment of this subject is not discussed in the Mahābhārata.

Importance of Danḍanīti

The epic discusses well the importance of Danḍanīti. The Kauṭilya's treatment of this subject is in a comparative way but the Mahābhārata does not treat in that way. It regards Danḍanīti as an essential element for the maintenance of human society, and being associated with the *Trayī* and *Vārtā*, it causes prosperity to the people, and regulates law and order.⁵¹

Being properly handled by king, it prevents the people from following Adharma, and protects the Varṇa and Āśrama-dharmas.⁵² It instructs the people to follow their duties reminding them that non-following of their duties would result in disorder in society.⁵³ Thus, according to it, Danḍanīti is an instrument to protect the Varṇa and Āśrama rules.

Danḍanīti protects the *Vedas* also which are the sources of Dharma⁵⁴ but the epic asserts that the Vedic tradition and studies come to an end when Danḍanīti disappears, and due to it, Dharma comes to an end causing disorder in society.⁵⁵

Protection of Dharma also depends upon Danḍanīti. It stands for the elements of morality. The people deviate from

50. K.A. 1.1-4.

51. सा चेद्धर्मक्रिया न स्यात्त्रयीधर्ममृते भुवि ।
दण्डनीतिमृते चापि निर्मर्यादमिदं भवेत् ॥

Āraṇyaka. 149.32.

52. ŚP. 59.14-27.

53. Ibid. 65.5-6.

54. Ibid. 286.40.

55. मज्जेत्रयी दण्डनीतौ हतायां सर्वधर्मान भवेयुर्विरुद्धाः ।

सर्वधर्माश्चाश्रमाणां गताः स्युः क्षात्रेत्यक्ते राजधर्मे पुराणे ॥

ŚP. 63.28.

the righteous path, but it is the king, who with its help brings them to the right path.⁵⁶ A perusal of the circumstances leading to the origin of Daṇḍanīti, reveals that its main purpose was the establishment of moral way of life by punishing those who violate the law. There are many internal references to show that the kings brought the subjects to the right path with the help of Daṇḍanīti.⁵⁷

The king is the creator of time factor, he can cause prosperity to the people by removing their sufferings, but side by side can cause untold sufferings and miseries to them also. The question arises whether the time factor is responsible for causing the king to be good or bad or vice versa. The epic answers that it is the king who causes the time factor. He can transform the Kali into the Satyayuga and vice versa.⁵⁸ But, is it possible for him to do so alone? According to the Mahābhārata, he cannot fulfil this mission without the help of Daṇḍanīti, as it is the Daṇḍa which empowers him to transform the Kali-age into the Kṛitayuga.⁵⁹ The degree of happiness also depends upon the degree of utilisation of Daṇḍanīti as he creates the Satyayuga, Tretā and Dvāpara by utilising it fully, $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ respectively, but discarding it completely or neglecting the administrative affairs, he brings only sufferings to the people and nothing else.⁶⁰ Daṇḍanīti being properly used by him proves itself as the parents of the people by protecting and nourishing them well, so, he should follow its injunctions.⁶¹

The king has to follow the injunctions of Daṇḍanīti for attaining heaven which itself depends upon the merits gained by him by causing happiness to his subjects. By creating

56. ŚP. 59.77.

57. Ibid. 65.30.

58. Ibid. 70.1-32.

59. Udyoga. 130.12-13 ; ŚP. 70.7-13.

60. ŚP. 70.14-24.

61. Ibid. 70.30-32.

the Kṛitayuga, he goes to heaven to realise happiness for ever, by creating the Tretā and Dvāpara he remains in the heaven temporarily, but by creating the Kali, he goes to hell to suffer for ever.⁶² There are many historical illustrations to show that during the compositional period of the epic the notion of the attainment of heaven and hell by serving and dis-servicing the people was known by kings as the Aśokan inscriptions many times refer to it.⁶³

On account of all these reasons, Daṇḍanīti is of more importance, as it is *Lokarakṣaṇakārikā*⁶⁴ or protects the people. The code of Brahmā was composed for the welfare of people and for the realisation of Trivarga.⁶⁵ The Kshātradharmā ensures best protection to the people.⁶⁶ The utmost happiness and welfare to all Beings are caused by Daṇḍanīti, otherwise complete annihilation is sure.⁶⁷

It is interesting to note that other political thinkers also express similar views regarding the importance of Daṇḍanīti. Kauṭilya thinks that the success of the human society depends upon it, so the king wishing to guide the people to the right path, should enforce the rules Daṇḍanīti.⁶⁸ Manu also expresses the same view.⁶⁹

Subject matter and scope :

The Mahābhārata does not discuss this point in a direct way, but the contents of the code by Brahmā as described in the Śānti Parva, help us to know the scope and subject matter of Daṇḍanīti. While narrating the contents in Brahmā's

62. ŚP. 70.25-28.

63. Kalīṅga R.E. (Dhauri) 1.

64. ŚP. 59.77.

65. Ibid. 59.76.

66. Ibid. 63.26-27.

67. Ibid. 64.1-5 & 65.1.

68. K.A. 1.3-4.

69. Manu 7.15-25.

work, the compilers of the epic seem to describe the subject matter and scope of Daṇḍanīti. It seems that in order to save the religious character of the epic, they, in disguise of narrating the contents of Brahmā's code, have discussed the subject matter and scope of Daṇḍanīti in general. It also may be possible that they borrowed these things from treatises on Daṇḍanīti for describing the subject matter and scope of the science of government. A study of the contents of Brahmā's comprehensive code reveals the fact that, though, Daṇḍanīti has main concern with the state-craft, yet it deals with the fourfold objectives of human life.⁷⁰

It deals with the Dharma, Artha and Kāma, which have value in the man's life. The Mokṣatrivarga consisted of the Satva-Rajas and Tamas, the Daṇḍaja Trivarga namely the Sthāna Vṛddhi, Kṣaya, and Ṣadvarga are the subject matter to be dealt with by it.

It discusses the characteristics of the princes who are to be kings in future, the requisites and duties of kings, ten types of Vyasanās originated from Kāma and Krodha to be discarded by them, along with the moral virtues to be followed also find place in the contents of Daṇḍanīti. It includes within its fold the characteristics of the Pañchvarga namely the ministers, population-cum-territory, forts, army and treasury.

Foreign policy is of vital importance for the state, so it discusses the Upāya viz. the Sāma (conciliation), Dāna, Daṇḍa (use of force) and Bheda (creating dissension). Furthermore, it deals with the Shādagūṇya or the sixfold foreign policy.

The army is a means to protect the people and state from internal and external dangers, so it discusses the military affairs also such as different occasions of invasions, three types of victory, fourfold army with its eight limbs, means of communication, methods and means of self-defence, plans

to organise the army, battle-orders, methods of fighting, manufacture and preservation of weapons, removal of dangers from army, means and methods to terrorise the enemy and to create dissension in his camp, use of the weapons of war and musical instruments.

Judiciary also is included in the frame-work of Daṇḍanīti, hence it refers to different types of laws and courts, proper punishment to the culprits and unpunishability of the Brāhmaṇas etc.

Finance is the root of the state, hence it deals with it, and discusses the principles and methods for the realisation of different types of taxes, items of expenditure, economic prosperity of the state, establishment and development of industries and the means to get the wealth.

All these things indicate that according to the Mahā-bhārata the subject matters of Daṇḍanīti are many which include all aspects of the statecraft.

Regarding its scope, it furnishes remarkable information. It remarks that as the footprints of all the living beings come within the fold of wide foot-prints of the elephant, likewise all the Dharmas are included (Saṃpralīna) in the wide range of Rājadharmā.⁷¹ Thus, it includes all human activities in its fold. Further, it widens its scope by stating that all limitations (Maryāda) of conduct and all types of knowledge are associated with it, and all the Lokas come within its scope. The scope of this science is very wide as it contains many subjects, so it cannot be measured (Aprameya).⁷² The Kshātradharmā is the best dharma, and all the Dharmas are included (Pravishtā) in it.

71. यथा राजर्हास्तपदे पदानि संलीयन्ते सवस्तबोद्भवानि ।
एवं धर्मान् राजधर्मेषु सर्वान्सर्वावस्थं संप्रलीनास्त्रिवोध ॥

ŚP. 63.25.

72. Ibid. 64.19, 21.

Chapter III

ĀCHĀRYAS

The long span of the compositional period of the Mahābhārata witnessed the birth of many political thinkers and growth of political ideas. It refers to two main traditions regarding the political thinkers, the first being that of the Chitraśikhāṇḍināḥ¹ and the second that of the Rājaśāstra-praṇetārah.² Besides these two categories of thinkers, there is a group of miscellaneous ones, whose views have been quoted directly or without referring to their names. It is rather peculiar that Bhīshma is not regarded as a political thinker. Kauṭilya refers to the views of Kanuṇapadanta and some historians have tried to identify him with Bhīshma³ on the basis of solitary reference in a very late work, the Trikāṇḍa-kosha.⁴ But it is very difficult to accept this view as the epic does not refer to this name of Bhīshma, and as such in the present state of our knowledge, it is not appropriate to accept him as a political thinker.

The Chitraśikhāṇḍināḥ :

These (Marīchī, Atri, Angirā, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vaśishṭha) were the first persons⁵ who had composed a comprehensive code of conduct in order to regulate the law in society. Their work was a composite one, and contained one lakh of śloka dealing with the matters related to all

1. ŚP. 322.26-27.

2. Ibid. 58.2-3.

3. Kapadia, B. H. The predecessors of Kauṭilya, JIH, Vol. 39, Pt. 3, p. 357.

4. Trikāṇḍakoṣa. 2.8.12.

5. ŚP. 322.26-27.

aspects of human life.⁶ Brihaspati had taught its teachings to king Vasu Uparichara, who acting according to those injunctions became a very prosperous king.⁷

At present we do not have at our disposal, that comprehensive work by them, and Kauṭilya also does not quote their views, though he refers to the schools of Manu, Uśanā, and Brihaspati who had studied their work.⁸ It seems that he did not regard them as political thinkers belonging to the independent branch of political science, hence non-reference to them is justified.

Though, the original work by them is not available, yet there are some works or views which are attributed to them except in case with Pulaha and Kratu. The views of Marīchī have been quoted by several writers, but the original work even attributed to him, is not available, and most of his views are related to Prāyaśchita and Vyavahāra.⁹ After the name of Atri there are a few works known as the Ātreya Dharmaśātra, Atri-Smṛiti, Laghu-Atri and the Vṛiddha Ātreya-Smṛiti.¹⁰ Some of the verses in the epic and the Manusmṛiti contain references to his views. All these works attributed to him are later works, composed after the beginning of the Christian era, and deal with Prāyaśchita. The present Aṅgirā-smṛiti¹¹ also discusses socio-religious problems. Several verses from the Pulastysmṛiti¹² have been quoted by Viśvarūpa and their perusal shows that the work was composed sometime during the period from the 4th to the 7th century A.D. It does not discuss political problems. The Vaśiṣṭha-Dharma-Sūtra deals with the socio-religious matters and

6. ŚP. 322.29-41.

7. Ibid. 322.45-48.

8. Ibid. 322.41-46.

9. Kane, P. V. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Pt. 1, Pp. 230-231.

10. Ibid. Pp. 107-110.

11. Ibid. Pp. 201-222.

12. Ibid. p. 228.

furnishes some references to the political subjects also.¹³ It contains matters related to the ancient traditions, and it seems that it was composed during the period from the 3rd to the 1st century B.C. His views are quoted by Manu and others. Except in case with this work, all other works deal with the socio-religious matters, hence, it is very difficult to guess their views on political matters. Again, it is difficult to assume how far the present *Vaśiṣṭha-Dharma-Sūtra* also is indebted to the original work by the *Chitraśikhandināḥ*. The information supplied by the epic¹⁴ that Manu, *Uśanas* and *Bṛihaspati* had studied that work, and made it as the base book for writing their works, indicates that the respective work contained matters on political matters also.

The Rājasastra prajelārah :

The *Mahābhārata* refers to the names of six thinkers and regards them as the pioneers in the field of political thought. Those were *Viśālāksha*, *Kāvya*, *Sahasrāksha Mahendra*, *Prāchetas Manu*, *Bhāradvāja* and *Gaurasirā*.¹⁵

Viśālāksha had summarised the code of *Brahmā* into 1000 chapters, hence this particular work was known as the *Vaiśālākshaṁ* after his name.¹⁶ The epic does not refer to his views in a direct way, but the glimpses of his political ideas may be gleaned through the *Arthaśāstra* of *Kauṭilya*, who has cited many of his views on different topics of *Danḍaniti*. *Viśālāksha* thinks that those persons should be appointed as ministers who have served the king during difficult times and have proved their loyalty to him.¹⁷ He further advises the king to appoint many ministers.¹⁸ He favours the imprison-

13. Kane, P. V. *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Pt. 1, p. 59.

14. ŚP. 322.41-46.

15. Ibid. 58.2-3.

16. Ibid. 59.86-88.

17. K.A. 1.7.

18. Ibid. 1.14.

ment of wicked princes and regards the Vyasana on Janapada as more disasterous than on ministers.¹⁹ He considers Vāk-pārūshuya (abusive language) to be more effective than Artha-dūshaṇa²⁰ (unjust seizure of property). He advances the view that a weak king being invaded by a stronger one should resist him with all his resources and must never bow down to him, as valour ends the distress and removes difficulties.²¹ These things show that the work of Viśālāksha was very popular, and his views were highly appreciated. The non-existence of the original work presents difficulties to us in acquainting ourselves with the ideas advanced by him, but, it is certain that he was a predecessor of Kauṭilya and existed before the 4th century B.C. Later on, divinity was attributed to him, hence the epic refers to him as Bahurūpa, Śiva, Sthāṇu and Umāpati.²²

Kāvyā Uśanas was the son and grandson of Kavi and Bhṛigu respectively, hence was known as Kāvyā Bhārgava,²³ and was famous for his wisdom and sharp intellect.²⁴ The epic refers to many names of this celebrated teacher, such as Kaviputra, Śukra-Uśanas and Kāvyā-Uśanas.²⁵ Why and how Uśana came to be known as Śukra? The epic contains an interesting story regarding this changeover of his name from Uśanas to Śukra. The account is mythological and is very derogatory. It states that once Kubera had appointed him as the protector of his wealth, but he stole away the former's property. So, on the request of Kubera, Lord Śiva placed Uśanas in his abdomen for a long time but on being requested by him he allowed him to come out of his abdomen, but only through the way of His Śiśna hence he was known

19. K. A. 1.16 and 8.1 respectively.

20. Ibid. 8.3.

21. Ibid. 12.1.

22. ŚP. 59.86-88.

23. Ādi. Chapter 60 ; Anuśāsana. 85.40-41.

24. Āraṇyaka. 5.2.

25. Ādi. 71.7-10, 20.

as Śukra.²⁶ It seems that this derogatory story was innovated by the orthodox Brāhmaṇas in order to defame him as he was the priest of the Asuras.

He had summarised the comprehensive code of Brahmā into 1000 chapters, hence his work was known as the Auśanasām which was widely studied by kings.²⁷ His Nīti has been regarded as the means for the maintenance of the world.²⁸ Kṛishṇa is referred to as speaking in the Kaurava court according to the Nīti of Śukra.²⁹ His view that the soldiers who have left the battle field being hard pressed, must not be chased, because they having no care for life fight vigorously, and cause much destruction, was very popular and widely appreciated.³⁰ Bhīshma has cited his view that the Kshatriya should fight and imprison those Brāhmaṇas who come to the battle field to fight,³¹ though normally they are not to be punished with corporal punishment. He has cited his view regarding the king's necessity.³² Śukra thinks that the king should not have too much faith in any person, as it is very destructive to the state.³³

Kauṭilya refers to many thoughts belonging to the school of Uśanas. His status as a political thinker may be judged from the fact that he while offering his respect to the ancient thinkers in the beginning of his work, first offers his reverence to Śukra.³⁴ Charaka and Kālidāsa also refer to his Arthaśāstra and Nīti respectively.³⁵

As a matter of fact, his work the Auśanas Arthaśāstra as

26. ŚP. Ch. 278.

27. Ibid. 58.2-3., 59.86-91., 122.11.

28. Āraṇyaka. 149.29.

29. Udyogo. 29.42.

30. Śalya. 57.12-13.

31. ŚP. 56.28-30.

32. Ibid. 57.40-41.

33. Ibid. 136.184-186.

34. K.A. Beginning of the First Book.

35. Charaka-Saṁhitā. 8.54 ; Kumārasaṁbhavaṁ. 3.6.

referred to by Kauṭilya and many other writers of the subsequent ages is not available to us. The manuscripts of a book, known as the Auśanas Dharmaśāstra³⁶ are available. It contains seven chapters on different aspects, has resemblances with the Dharmasūtra literature, many of its verses find place in the Manusmṛiti, and Manu also is quoted many times in this work. According to the views of experts, it is later than the Manusmṛiti. It is not his original work but seems to be a work attributed to him. There are again two more works known as the Auśanas Dharmaśāstra containing 51 verses and the Auśanas Smṛiti containing 600 verses respectively.³⁷ These also are later works attributed to him. The Śukranītisāra also is a work ascribed to him, but it is a work which date of composition ranges from the 6th to 16th century A.D. So due to non-existence of the original work by him, it is not possible for us to say anything regarding his views on different aspects of Daṇḍanīti.

Bāhudantīputra is known as Sahasrāksha Mahendra,³⁸ and has been referred to as having summarised the code of Brahmā into 5000 chapters, hence that work was known as the Bāhudantakaṁ.³⁹ He was also a predecessor of Kauṭilya as he refers to many of his views regarding the qualifications to be possessed by the persons to be appointed as ministers. This teacher thinks that those persons should be appointed as ministers who have practical experience, are wise, loyal to the king, trustworthy and are very brave.⁴⁰ The same view has been mentioned in the epic also,⁴¹ but his name is not referred to in that context. It seems that the epic incorporated his ideas into its fold without referring to his name.

36. Kane, P. V. Op.cit. Pt., 1, p. 111.

37. Ibid. p. 115.

38. ŚP. 58.2-3.

39. Ibid. 59.88-89.

40. K.A. 1.7.

41. Infra, Ch. 7.

Like the works of the other ancient teachers, his original work also is not available to us.

Prāchetas Manu was a political thinker whose view has been mentioned in the epic that the people should discard the king like a broken boat, if he does not protect them well.⁴² Besides this Manu, it refers to Svāyambhuva Manu and cites his views such as that only fair means should be adopted in war and immoral means should always be discarded.⁴³ He thinks that intellect is the root of victory.⁴⁴ Furthermore, it refers to his view regarding the eightfold duties of a king.⁴⁵ He had studied the Śāstra composed by Chitraśikhāṇḍinā.⁴⁶ It seems that Svāyambhuva Manu was not only a political thinker but he had formulated some rules regarding the social institutions also. He had legalised the practice of Niyoga system⁴⁷ and the epic contains his view on Prāyaśchita.⁴⁸

The Mahābhārata presents many views attributed to Manu by the general name and does not prefix either Prāchetas or Svāyambhuva to him. It refers to the Rājadharmā⁴⁹ and Arthavidyā⁵⁰ of Manu. He thinks that war is always useful to the Kshatriyas.⁵¹ He regards it as a meritorious deed to sacrifice one's own life for the protection of the Brāhmaṇas.⁵² He thinks that the king should prevent every person from begging alms except in distress.⁵³

It is very difficult for us to decide the identification of

42. ŚP. 57.43-45.

43. Ibid. 96.14.

44. Ibid. 113.17.

45. Ibid. 137.99-102.

46. Ibid. 322.41.

47. Ādi. 111.31.

48. ŚP. 148.26.

49. Āraṇyaka. 36.20.

50. Droṇa. 5.34.

51. ŚP. 55.17.

52. ŚP. 79.29.

53. Ibid. 89.15.

Manu, Prāchetas Manu and Svāyambhuva Manu. The question arises whether these two Manus are the same or not? and, what relationship existed between the two if they were different persons? It is apparent that Manu is a political thinker, and by the 4th century B.C., a school had come into existence after his name as Kauṭilya frequently refers to the Mānavāḥ. He also does not enlighten us on the problem of the identification of Manus, namely the Prāchetas and Svāyambhuva. Kauṭilya must have studied some treatise written by Manu, the political thinker. Was it the Mānavadharmasūtra? Does it represent the views of Manu? Was the present Manusmṛiti written on the basis of that Sūtra? These are some important questions to be answered in order to settle the problem of Manu. A comparative study of the Mānavadharmasūtra with that of the Manusmṛiti indicates that there are many fundamental differences between these two works. Kane has come to this conclusion that the source book for Kauṭilya was different from these works. The quotations from the work of Manu borrowed by Gautama and Vaśiṣṭha do not tally in many cases with the corresponding matters in the Mānavadharmasūtra and Manusmṛiti.⁵⁴ The epic distinguishes between Svāyambhuva⁵⁵ Manu and Prāchetas Manu,⁵⁶ the former is said to be the promulgator of Dharmaśāstra and the latter of Arthaśāstra. It is not unlikely that there were two distinct works on Dharma and Arthaśāstras composed by them. Possibly, it was the work by Prāchetas Manu which was studied by Kauṭilya. Perhaps, the Dharmaśāstra composed by Svāyambhuva Manu contained matters relating to the statecraft also. The author of the present Manusmṛiti seems to have combined in his work the matters contained in those two works and supplanted both with the present Manusmṛiti, but much after the time of

54. Kane, P. V. Op.cit., Pt. 1, Pp. 79-85, 136-139.

55. ŚP. 322.43.

56. Ibid. 58.2-3.

Kauṭilya. Besides quoting the views of two Manus, the epic contains several verses which are common to the Manusmṛiti. Perhaps, the Bhārgavas combined the two works by Prāchetas and Svāyambhuva Manus into one with some changes and added common verses to both the works.

Bhāradvāja was a political thinker, whose personal name was Kaṇika, and belonged to the Bhāradvāja Gotra, hence, is known as Kaṇika Bhāradvāja in the epic.⁵⁷ His views on political problems have been discussed in one complete chapter in the Śānti Parva⁵⁸. Kauṭilya refers to his views on many problems, and some of those are contained in the epic also.

The problem of his identification is a matter of hypothesis. He may be identified with Bhāradvāja Droṇa, but it presents some practical difficulties, because in the Mahābhārata, he is not mentioned as a political thinker. Jolly and Shama-Shastri identify him with the political thinker by the same name in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya⁵⁹. In the Mahābhārata also, his name is given as Kaṇika Bhāradvāja.⁶⁰ So, he may be identified with the person of the same name as referred to in it and the Arthaśāstra.

As a matter of fact, there is no similarity between the teachings of Bharadvaja in the Mahābhārata and the views attributed to him in the Arthaśāstra. For example, he, in the epic says that one should blaze though only for a moment like the Tinduka-fire brand, and not smoke for long like chaff-fire.⁶¹ This cannot be compared with Bhāradvāja's view in the Arthaśāstra that a weak king should always submit to a stronger one⁶². In the epic, he advises the king to discard Kāma and Krodha⁶³, but in the Arthaśāstra he says that

57. ŚP. 138. 3-4.

58. Ibid. Ch. 138.

59. K.A. 5.5.

60. ŚP. 138.3-4.

61. Ibid. 138.19.

62. K.A. 12.1.

63. ŚP. 138.13.

from many points of view these are necessary.⁶⁴ The Kaṇika-nīti in the Mahābhārata, does not represent the views of Kaṇika Bhāradvāja as referred to in the Arthaśāstra, but there are some points which are common to both the treatises. Bhīṣma, while describing the necessity of king says that he is like Indra, and one who bows down before a stronger person, really bows down before Indra.⁶⁵ The same are the words attributed to Bhāradvāja in the Arthaśāstra, where they seem to be provided with a better context than in the Mahābhārata.⁶⁶

At present, no work, attributed to him is available, but his views have been quoted by many authors. Besides Kauṭilya in the 4th century B.C. and the Mahābhārata, the Yaśas-tilaka quotes his two verses from his treatise on the topic of the six Guṇas so it indicates that the work by him was in existence even up to the tenth century A.D.⁶⁷ In Parāśara-Madhaviya and Sarasvatī-Vilāsa there are verses of Bhāradvāja on politics.⁶⁸

Gauraśirā is the last person to be enumerated in the list of Rājaśāstrapraṇetāraḥ⁶⁹. The epic refers to him in the court of Indra along with other sages,⁷⁰ but it does not enlighten us on the political ideas advanced by him. Other works also do not contain his political views. A very late work namely the Nitiprakāśa by Janamejaya refers to him as a Rājaśāstrapraṇetā,⁷¹ but does not mentions his views.

Other political thinkers :

Besides referring to the Chitraśikhaṇḍīnaḥ and Rājaśāstra-

64. K.A. 8.1.

65. ŚP. 67.11.

66. K.A. 12.1.

67. Kane, P. V. Op.cit., Pt. 1, p. 127.

68. Ibid., p. 128.

69. ŚP. 58.2-3.

70. Sabhā. 7.9.

71. Kane. P. V. Op.cit., Pt. 1, p. 111.

praṇetāraḥ, the epic refers to some other political thinkers whose views are quoted by it.

Bṛihaspati was a prominent political thinker like Śukra, but it is a very strange matter that the epic does not include his name in the list of the Rājaśāstrapraṇetāraḥ. By the 4th century B.C., his work had gained popularity and authenticity, as it is apparent from a large number of his views cited by Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra. The epic also refers to many of his views. He was the son of Aṅgirā and the priest of Gods.⁷² He had studied the work composed by the Chitraśikhandaṇaḥ.⁷³ He had taught political science to king Vasu Uparichara⁷⁴ of the Chedi country, and Bhīṣma also had studied Rājanīti⁷⁵ from him. He has been regarded as a great wise man, a Mantrajña⁷⁶, and his Niti has been regarded as a means for the maintenance of the world.⁷⁷

He gives emphasis on prowess, and not on fortune,⁷⁸ and advises the king to act according to the time and place factors, to follow the middle path and punish even the Guru, if he is found guilty.⁷⁹ In his views, the king gains more merit by protecting the people, than by performing sacrifices.⁸⁰ His theories were well studied by king Vasuhoma. Bṛihaspati refers to the king's mode of conduct to be adopted towards his foe, and discusses the means for Arthasiddhi.⁸¹ He is of the opinion that the foes must be exterminated by adopting any means.⁸² He was also a great strategist and had invented many new

72. Āranyaka. 207.17, 208.2 ; ŚP. 323.1.

73. ŚP. 322.41-43, 51-52.

74. Ibid. 322.45.323.3.

75. Ādi. 94.33-34 ; ŚP. 38.6-9.

76. Udyoga. 6.3.

77. Āranyaka. 149.29.

78. Ibid. Ch. 33.

79. ŚP. 57.38-40, 57.6-7 respectively.

80. Ibid. 69.61-71.

81. Ibid. 104.3-43, 164.12.

82. Sabhā. 66.8.

battle-orders, to which Kauṭilya also refers to.⁸³ Regarding waging war, he thinks that a king should attack his enemy only when he is stronger than him, otherwise he should make alliance with the latter.⁸⁴

The epic mentions him as having summarised the code of Brahmā into 3000 sections,⁸⁵ but at present his original work is not available to us. Kauṭilya cites six times the views of his school and Aśvaghosha and Bhāsa⁸⁶ also refer to his Arthaśāstra. A work known as the Bṛihaspati Sūtram is available, but it deals with Vyavahāra and Prāyaścita only.⁸⁷ The Bṛihaspati Smṛiti containing only 80 verses and the Bārhaspatya-Arthaśāstra attributed to him are very late works.⁸⁸

Śaṅkha-Likhita as two brothers figure as political thinkers in the Mahābhārata.⁸⁹ They are seen at the court of Indra along with other sages.⁹⁰ The epic refers to the Vyavahāra of Śaṅkha-Likhita and their followers.⁹¹ These references show that there existed a code composed by them on Vyavahāra.

At present, we do not have the original work by them, though their views, and many lines have been quoted by many authors. Yājñavalkya, Parāśara and Kumārila refer to the work composed by them.⁹² P. V. Kane has collected all verses and references from many works, and has published

83. Karṇa. 22.11, 31.26 ; K.A. 10.6.

84. Śalya. 3.42.

85. ŚP. 59.90.

86. Aśvaghosha, Buddhacharita, 1.46, Bhāsa, Pratimānātakaṁ, 5th Act, p. 134. (Chawkhamba Edition).

87. Kane, P. V. Op.cit., Pt. 1, Pp. 125-126.

88. Bṛihaspati-Smṛiti in Jivananda's collection of Smṛitis, Pt. 1, Pp. 644-651, Bārhaspatya-Arthasastra edited by Thomas, F. W. Lahore, 1921.

89. ŚP. 24.2-22.

90. Sabhā. 7.9.

91. ŚP. 116.21, 130.15.

92. Yājñavalkya-smṛiti, 1.5 ; Parāśara Smṛiti, 1.24 ; Kumārila, Tantrā-Khyāi-Kā. p. 146.

them by the name of the Śaṅkha-Likhita Dharma-Sūtra.⁹³ This work is purely on Dharma and Vyavahāra and does not refer to the political ideas. Besides this work, we have some other works attributed to them such as the Śaṅkha-Smṛiti containing 18 chapters and 330 verses, and the Likhita-Smṛiti containing only 93 verses, both in the Jivānanda's collection of the Smṛitis. The Laghu-Śaṅkha-Smṛiti containing only 71 verses and the Śaṅkha-Likhita-Smṛiti containing 32 verses have been attributed to them, but these do not discuss political matters.

In our tradition Nārada is known as a great political thinker. His views have not been frequently quoted by the epic, as in case with other political thinkers. The Sabhāparva⁹⁴ contains the 'Questions of Nārada to king Yudhisṭhira' dealing with the political and administrative matters, but it is not mentioned that those are the views of Nārada. There are two possibilities: first, the compilers of epic have incorporated his political views into a summarised form in that Parva, and secondly, they on the imitation of the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa⁹⁵ have discussed the administrative problems in the form of questions. The first probability seems to be reasonable and logical. It seems that Nārada's views on political matters were incorporated in the epic in question-form, and it was done during the period of the Pre-Christian era, as we get many technical terms which are considerably archaic.

Like other ancient works, the treatise composed by Nārada is not available to us, but a work known as Nāradiya Arthaśāstra existed, as it has been referred to in the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa.⁹⁶ Bāṇabhaṭṭa, a writer of the 7th century A.D. refers to the Nāradiyaṁ in connection with the political

93. Published in ABORI, Vol. 7, Pts. 1-2, Pp. 108-128, Vol. 8, Pt. 1, Pp. 93-132.

94. Sabhā, Ch. 5.

95. Ayodhyā, Ch. 100.

96. Ibid.

science.⁹⁷ It may be assumed that the work composed by him is the present Nārada-Smṛiti but this view is unacceptable, on account of its not being an independent work on Rājadharmā because it deals with it only in a passing way, and is mainly concerned with Vyāvahāra. Perhaps it is the Nāradiyaṁ which was the source book to the questions of Nārada to Yudhisṭhira. Probably, it was the original work by Nārada from which Chanḍśvara has quoted many verses in his Rājanīti Ratnākara, but up till now, that original work is not discovered.

Śambara Mahāmāya's views have been quoted twice in the epic. Regarding the victor's treatment with the enemy, he thinks that he should forgive a defeated king after giving much sufferings to him in order to control him for ever, but this view has been criticised by others who think that the defeated enemy should be treated as a son in order to make him loyal.⁹⁸ Regarding the preservation of treasury, he is more particular, and advises the king to be careful in expending the amount even during the crisis-period. Neither his original work, nor any work attributed to him is available to us, but his views, as mentioned above show, that he differed much from the views of other thinkers. It may be guessed that he flourished sometime after Kauṭilya and before the 3rd or the 4th century A.D. as the former does not refer to him and the epic's last phase of compilation is the period as mentioned earlier. The Rāmāyaṇa also refers to Śambara-śatamāya Mahāsura who resided in the Daṇḍaka Forest,⁹⁹ but his identity is not established.

Devala is not mentioned as a political thinker in a direct way, but some of his views as contained in the Mahābhārata indicate that he was a political thinker, and had composed a treatise. Yudhisṭhira has cited his view that victory

97. Kādambarī, p. 91. (Peterson's Edition).

98. ŚP. 103.31-32.

99. VR. Ayodhyā, 9.12-13, 45.

achieved on the battlefield is more praiseworthy, than the one achieved by playing dice.¹⁰⁰ Again, Bhīma has cited his view that a person illumines with three things namely the progeny, his own deeds and learning.¹⁰¹ He was so prominent a sage that Kṛishṇa has regarded himself as sage Devala.¹⁰² His original work is not available but his quotations reveal that his work dealt with the Dharma-Vyavahāra and Prāyaśchita. The present Devala-Smṛiti is a late work attributed to him which was composed during the 8th century A.D. and has no concern with his political ideas. Regarding his probable date, it may be assumed that he existed some time between the 3rd century B.C. to the 4th century A.D.

The Nīti of Vidura forms a section in the Udyoga-Parva of the epic.¹⁰³ He was a brother of Dhṛitarāshṭra and Pāṇḍu, and was a very wise person, expert in the matters of Dharma and Artha.¹⁰⁴ He was a minister of Dhṛitarāshṭra but later on, was appointed as the Shādgūṇyachintaka and the minister in-charge of the formulation of state-policy (Mantraniśchaya)¹⁰⁵ by Yudhisṭhira. He was a learned person and had studied the work of Bṛihaspati.¹⁰⁶

It seems that the Vidura-Nīti which forms a section in the Udyoga-Parva, was added to the Mahābhārata. Vidura was not a political thinker like the persons referred to in foregoing lines, as the writers on the political science have not quoted his views. His Nīti deals with the subjects like social institutions, economic and religious aspects of life, political institutions such as abilities and duties of kings, ministers, treasury, officials, spies, servants and others. The Vidura-Nīti in the epic is certainly an interpolation

100. Sabhā. 53.6-7.

101. Ibid. 64.5.

102. Gītā. 10.13.

103. Udyoga. Chapters, 33-40.

104. Ibid. 33.5, 11.

105. ŚP. 41.9.

106. Sabhā. 46.9-11.

into it. Earlier than this, there is no reference to Vidura as a political thinker. The Vidura-Niti seems to be a composition of the early Gupta Period.¹⁰⁷

The Mahābhārata refers to some of the ideas advanced by Kāmandaka. The discourse between him and king Āṅgīrashṭha¹⁰⁸ throws considerable light on his political views. His views deal with the mode of king's conduct, and the proper way for realising the Trivarga. Kāmandaka has given references to the views of ancient Āchāryas also.¹⁰⁹ It seems that the epic has incorporated his views in its fold, but his original work is not available to us.

A work known as the Kāmandaka-Nīti-sāra exists now-a-days, but it is difficult to say as to how far it represents the original views of Kāmandaka, because more or less, it is a metrical transformation of the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya. Śikhara has attributed this work to Kāmandaka. Who was this Śikhara? Abu Saliha, an Arab writer has referred to the Nītisāra of Kāmandaka and has given its abstract into Arabic.¹¹⁰ He calls the author of this book as Sifara, this word corresponds in Samskrita with Śikhara. We know that Śikhara was a minister of Chandragupta Second.¹¹¹ In the opening verse of the text, the writer refers to his patron as 'Deva' and the inscriptions of Prabhāvatī Gupta refer to her father's name as Deva. Śikhara was the author of Kāmandakiya Nītisāra, which is evident from internal sources also. In Chapter 25th, verse 71, he seems to defend the murder of a Śāka by his sovereign when he says, 'Morality

107. Tiwari, A.R.G., Vidura-Niti—A Cultural and Political Study, JIH, Vol. 36, Pt. 3, Pp. 340-341.

108. ŚP. 123.10-34.

109. Ibid. 123.19.

110. Dikshitara, V.R.R., Kāmandakiya-Nītisara, JIH, Vol. 28, Pt. 1, p. 47.

111. Fleet, J. F., Gupta Inscriptions, Karmadanda Inscription of Kumārgupta-I.

is not offended by a murder of an enemy through disguise'.¹¹² K. P. Jayasawal has identified this Śikhara, the author of the Kāmandakiya Nītisāra with Śikhara-Svāmin, the minister of Chandragupta second, and regards the work as composition of the Gupta period. If we accept this, then it is apparent that the book was composed between 375-415 A.D. i.e., during the reign of Chandragupta second. The author has attributed this work to Kāmandaka, which suggests that he flourished prior to this period or perhaps one or two centuries earlier. The epic refers to this Kāmandaka whose original work still remains undiscovered. Dikshitara is of the view that Kāmandaka was the family name of Śikhara as Vishṇu Śarmā was of Kauṭilya,¹¹³ but this hypothesis cannot be accepted as the Kāmandakiya-Nītisāra does not contain even a single reference to it. The references to Kāmandaka in the Mahābhārata show that he was a popular and ancient political thinker, so the author of the Nītisāra thought it appropriate to ascribe his work to him in order to make it popular and authentic.

Besides these, the epic mentions a few other political thinkers. As a matter of fact, their works are not available to us. It is only the Mahābhārata which refers to them. Those are Kālakavṛikṣhīya, Vāmadeo, Aṅgirā Utatthya, and Mātāṅga. The views of Kālakavṛikṣhīya regarding civil-service¹¹⁴ and inter-state relations¹¹⁵ also have been referred to in the Mahābhārata. It also may be possible that its compilers attributed their own views to him. It is difficult to say anything regarding the exact nature of his work, as it is not available.

Vāmdeva's views on the king's duties and the mode of conduct have been well discussed in the epic.¹¹⁶ His identi-

112. Kāmandaka Nītisāra, 25.71.

113. Dikshitara, V. R., Op.cit., p. 47.

114. ŚP. Chapter, 83.

115. Ibid. Chapters 106-107.

116. Ibid. Chapters 94-95.

fication is a difficult problem. A sage by this name has been referred to in the Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa as the Rītivika of Daśaratha and the minister of Rāma.¹¹⁷ Again, one Vāmadeo has been referred to in the Mahābhārata whose two horses were forcibly retained by king Dalbha.¹¹⁸ There are no evidences to identify either of them with Vāmadeo, the political thinker.

Angira-Utatthya's views on Kshātra-Dharma are preserved in the discourse between him and king Māndhātā.¹¹⁹ His work is not available either in original form or ascribed to him. Probably, like the views of other unknown writers, the Mahābhārata incorporated his views in that discourse.

Mātanga was a political thinker and his view has been referred to by Duryodhana which teaches us to die while resisting the enemy, rather than bow down to him.¹²⁰ It seems that the said thinker had composed a treatise on Daṇḍanīti but that is not available.

Though, the problems of the exact dates and chronology of the ancient thinkers are uncertain and confusing, but one thing is apparent that they represent different stages in the history of the development of ancient Indian political thought. Their original works are not available to us, so, we cannot say more in appreciation of their contributions, but their existence shows that prior to and after the date of Kauṭilya, the Rājāsāstra had attracted the attention of our ancestors, who gave serious thought to the problems of this branch of learning throughout the ages from different angles of views. All these things indicate that the ancient Indian mind was intensely engaged in ascertaining the truth and excellence of political ideas, as it was concerned with

117. Bālakāṇḍa, 7.4 ; Uttarakāṇḍa, 74.4 respectively.

118. Āraṇyaka, Ch. 190.

119. ŚP. Chapters, 91-92.

120. Udyoga. 125.19-20.

the subtle controversies in the fields of metaphysics, ethics and religion. The ancient Indian Rājanīti was not in a moribund condition, but was actuated by ideas, which were modified by political thinkers to suit the needs of changing times.¹²¹

121. Saletore, B.A., AIPTI, Pp. 49-50,

Chapter IV

STATE

Theories of Origin

The Indian political thinkers have speculated the causes of the origin of state and have advanced many theories, a perusal of which indicates that they approached the problem from a religious point of view, and have more or less ascribed it to the divine agencies. While analysing different theories one should be careful in separating the ingredients from the chaffs. It also is to be noted that several theories are interwoven in the same statements regarding a particular theory of the origin of state.

The epic advances the view that the reason for the origin of state was deterioration in the state of nature, which has been termed as the Kṛita-yuga, the state of the utmost happiness to the people, when they were carefree and did not undergo sufferings caused by hunger and disease, as they lived in nature, and their requirements were only a few. There was no king to rule nor the subjects to be ruled over, and life was prosperous.¹ This state of nature did not continue for a long time. Gradually, it deteriorated from the Kṛitayuga to the Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali : the ages during which the people suffered more, and realised less happiness.² But, what was the cause for deterioration in the state of nature? The Śānti Parva³ deals with this problem, and informs us that Moha, Kāma and Rāga or the ideas of attachment to the things, and the desire to achieve them were the main factors to cause deterioration in

1. Āraṇyaka. 148.9-21 ; 181.11-15 ; ŚP. 59.13-14 ; 70.7-13.

2. Ibid. 148.22-34.

3. ŚP. 59. 13-79 ; 67.14-15.

the state of nature. Due to these things, the law of morality came to an end, and people did not consider what should be done and what not. They discarded religious practices. Being pervaded by Kāma or desire, they began to occupy lands and monopolised women. 'Moha' and 'Raga' to property and women were the main causes for degeneration in morality, hence, for the protection of property and women, rise of some authority was essential. People suffered much from the disputes arising out of Moha, Kāma and Rāga ; so the Gods requested Brahmā to protect the suffering humanity from moral degeneration, and He, for that purpose, offered a code of conduct to the human beings to be followed by them for their prosperity. A king was, however, appointed by Him to enforce that Law.

The Buddhist⁴ and Jaina sources also speculate similar state of nature during earlier ages when people lived in virtues and realised complete happiness, but there came a degeneration which resulted in anarchy, but later on was removed by Mahājanasammata who was born asexually. Vasubandhu⁵ refers to Kāma, Rāga and Moha as indicated in the Śānti Parva as the factors to cause deterioration in the state of nature. Jinasena,⁶ though a very late writer (9th century A.D.) also refers to the state of nature, and has mentioned its degeneration. This situation was removed by Rishabhdeva.

The European scholars like Locke and Rousseau also have speculated the existence of the state of nature in a similar way. They also think that a degeneration in it was responsible for the origin of state.⁷

4. Dighanikāya, Vol. 3, Pp. 84-86.

5. Abhidharmakosha, Pp. 103ff., 1926, quoted by B. Ghosh, Origin of the State in Hindu Political Theory, SB. Pt. 2, Pp. 244-245.

6. Ādi Purāṇa, 3.30ff. quoted by A. S. Altekar, SGIA, p. 32.

7. Altekar, A. S., Op.cit., p. 32.

The theory advanced by the epic and others, seems to be reasonable, as the deterioration in the state of nature caused by the rise of the ideas of possession of property and women, were the factors necessitating the existence of some authority to regulate these things.

The theory of the divine origin speculates that the state is the creation of God, and He is the ruler. The germs of this theory are found in the *Rigveda*⁸ which mentions that the Kṣatriyas or Protectors were created by the Brahman. The epic also refers to it many times.⁹

The earliest allegory to the divine origin of state in the *Mahābhārata* has been mentioned in the *Āraṇyaka Parva* in connection with the appointment of Kārtikeya as the C-in-C. of the God's army for the protection of the Brāhmaṇas and the cows.¹⁰ But the *Śānti Parva* furnishes an exhaustive account of this theory. The deterioration in the state of nature caused sufferings to the people, and the Gods went to Brahmā to request Him to protect them; He, on their request, offered a code to be followed by them. He created the king to enforce the law.¹¹ This shows that the state came into being due to the inspiration from Gods. The law and the ruler both were created by Him.

Further, it has been said that for the enforcement of law offered by Brahmā the Gods requested Viṣṇu to select a person, who on their request, created a Mānasaputra named Virajasa, who rejecting His proposal for rulership, offered Saṁnyāsa, and this practice was followed by Kīrtimān and Kardama also who were the son and grandson of Virajas respectively.¹² Anāṅga; the son of Kardama accepted the

8. *Rigveda*, 10.90.12.

9. *Udyoga*, 130. 7-8; *ŚP*, 306-87.

10. *Āraṇyaka*, 214.1-17, 218.19-33, 40-46. *Anusāśana*; Chapters 83-86.

11. *ŚP*, 59.13-79.

12. *Ibid*, 59.93-96,

post, and protected the people.¹³ This may indicate that kings meant to rule over the earth and enforce the law, were of divine origin.

The divine origin of state is further elaborated through the story of Prithu Vainya. His supernatural appearance, coronation by the Gods, and the entrance of Vishṇu into his body, clearly indicate the divine origin of kingship.¹⁴

At another place, it has been mentioned that the people suffering from anarchy, requested Brahmā to appoint a man who could protect them. He in turn requested Manu to do something, but the latter did not accept His offer, fearing the difficult task of administration over human beings, who, in his views, are always engaged in false and unlawful acts, but at last, on certain conditions, he agreed to do so.¹⁵ This incident, though mythological in nature, refers to the divine origin of the king. The Daṇḍa also is of the divine origin. The story of the origin of sword¹⁶ indicates that the God originated it as an instrument for the protection of people, and offered it to the human Beings for that purpose. The Khaṅga was created for the removal of lawlessness, hence it has been regarded as the Dharmagoptā i.e. protector of the law.¹⁷

In western countries, this theory was formulated to strengthen the kingly powers, but in the scheme of the epic, it has been formulated for the protection of the people, and to make them loyal to the king provided he is good. This theory has been vehemently criticised, but it cannot be denied that it remained as the most popular theory for long and had hold over the subjects in all countries.

According to the theory of social contract, state is a

13. ŚP. 59.97-98.

14. Ibid. 59.98-130.

15. Ibid. 76.20-29.

16. Ibid. Ch. 160.

17. Ibid. 160.38-66.

contractual institution. The Aiteraiya and Taittiriya Brāhmaṇas contain some scanty references to it while illustrating the story of Indra's coronation as the king of the Gods.¹⁸

In social contract, people agree to honour the terms relating to the protection of family and property of each other, or such terms, as are formulated between the elected one and the people, but such things do not exist in the Brāhmaṇas.

For the first time, the Dīghanikāya¹⁹ presents a clear cut picture of this theory according to which, Mahājanasammata promised to protect the people, and the latter promised to offer 1/6th of their agricultural product to the former. The Arthaśāstra of Kautilya also presents a similar picture of social contract when it mentions that suffering from anarchy ; the people went to Vaivasvata Manu, requested him to protect them, and in lieu of that, they promised to offer 1/6th of their agricultural product, and 1/10th of mercantile to him.²⁰

In the epic ; the first clear cut picture of this theory is preserved in a story of coronation of king Prithu Vainya by sages. The latter ones placed some terms before him, such as to act according to the established law and not according to his own will, to promise to follow the Vedic injunctions, not to punish the Brāhmaṇas, to preserve the Varṇa and Dharma, and he accepted all these²¹ conditions. But it does not refer to the privileges given to him, and does not inform us of the terms to be followed by the people. It is a case of unilateral contract.

The next stage of development is more clear. The Mahābhārata informs us that the people having suffered from lawlessness, instituted an agreement (Samaya) among themselves to

18. Sharma, R. S. PIIAI, p. 48.

19. Dīghanikāya, 3.93ff.

20. K.A. 1.12.

21. ŚP. 59.99-115.

abandon (Tyājya) those who spoke much (Vākśūra), -were cruel in acts, encroached upon others property and violated the women's chastity.²² These terms indicate that it was a purely social contract to maintain the institutions of family and property. This type of agreement is not referred to in earlier literature, but it does not refer to the origin of state.

The most developed form of the social contract is preserved at another place in the epic. The people having suffered from lawlessness went to Brahmā with a request to provide them with a king whom they would respect provided he would protect and nourish them. He then requested Manu to govern them, who agreed to the proposal after some hesitation.²³ Therefore, people agreed to pay him 2% of their cattle, the same percentage of their gold and 10% of their agricultural product for the enrichment of his treasury, assured him to offer military assistance to him, and in lieu of these, he promised to protect them well.²⁴

The western political philosophers also have advanced this theory. Hobbes refers to the state of anarchy and surrender of all rights by the people to the king. They did not impose obligation on him. Locke²⁵ also refers to the golden age and deterioration in it. He informs that the people entered into an agreement to put an end to lawlessness, and organised a Govt., which was bound by the terms of original contract. Rousseau²⁷ also asserts that the Govt. came into being to conserve the rights that were naturally enjoyed by the men in the state of nature.

In modern terms the theory of Mātsyanyāya is known as the theory of force, and it presupposes an inherent propensity of man to encroach upon his weaker neighbour, and to be prone

22. ŚP. 67.18-19.

23. Ibid. 67.20-21.

24. Ibid. 67.23-27.

25. Altekar, A.S. op.cit. Pp. 31-33.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

to commit act of disorder and aggression. Scholars have criticised this theory and it has been observed that emergence of the state was not due to force, although, in the process of its expansion, it undoubtedly played a part.²⁸

In the epic this view has been advanced that no one in the world lives without the use of violence; the stronger ones live on the weaker ones²⁹. In the human society also, this rule is practised.

But, how this state of affairs is a cause to the origin of state? It is stated that it is only 'Daṇḍa' which can keep the world under control, protecting the weaker ones from the stronger ones. In its absence the human society will not survive and the rule of might would be the order of the day, so, the king is essential to inflict punishment upon those who create disorder in society.³⁰ The Mahābhārata refers to a fish taking shelter to Vaivasvata Manu for its protection for fear of destruction by a big fish. Is it not allegorical to the incident when human beings took shelter to Vaivasvata Manu for their protection from anarchy caused by the stronger ones³¹? Kauṭilya also refers to it in his work.³²

The Arājaka theory is analogous to the theory of the Mātsyanyāya. It presupposes the consequences due to non-existence of a ruling authority. According to the Mahābhārata, the people of a country without a king suffer more, because, the dacoits and robbers loot their property, the weaker ones are harassed by the stronger ones, law is not maintained, and chastity of women is not protected, so it is their foremost duty to appoint a king for their prosperity and well being.³³ In a kingless state, even the evil doers are not

28. MacIver, *The Modern State*, p. 227.

29. ŚP. 15.20-22, 15.30.

30. ŚP. 67.16-17.

31. Āraṇyaka. 185.7-8.

32. K.A. 1.12.

33. ŚP. 67.2-12.

safe. An evil doer, in an Arājaka state, realises happiness by depriving others of their property, but suffers when his possessions are occupied by stronger ones, in such a society no one is happy, therefore, in order to remove such a deplorable state of affairs, Gods created the king.³⁴ The people suffering from Arājaka went to Brahmā to request him to provide a king in order to protect them, hence He appointed Manu to remove lawlessness.³⁵

Jayaswal on the authority of the Aitereya Brāhmaṇa³⁶ comes to the conclusion that war was one of the causes of the origin of state in the Indo-Āryan society.

The epic also contains this tradition but it refers to Skanda as being appointed C-in-C of the God's army (Devasenā).³⁷ This is due to the growing influence of the cult of Skanda as a Paurāṇic God during the early centuries of the Christian Era.

The war theory has been criticised by many scholars, and they have exposed its hollowness as a theory of the origin of state.³⁸ It seems that it was a contributory factor in its origin. It accelerated the process of the extension of the kingly power, and in some cases, it led to the establishment of a few dynasties.

Some thinkers are of this opinion that state is the result of a long process of evolution of the human civilisation. According to the theory of historical evolution, the family came into being with the beginning of the idea of having property and institutionalised marriage. The families constitute the society. Even in the epic family was the main cause in the origin of the state. The struggles for possession of women, and landed property, were main causes for degeneration in

34. ŚP. 67.13-15.

35. Ibid. 67.20-29.

36. Ait. Br. 1.14.

37. Āraṇyaka. Ch. 213 ; Anuśāsana, Chapters 83-86.

38. Varma, V.P. HPTMF. Pp. 9-10.

the state of nature, and they required a king to protect the social institutions and property. This may indicate that the very origin of state was due to family which was under the control of Gṛihapati, and many such families constituted a village which was under the supervision of Grāmika, later on, many villages gave birth to the larger unit of administration under a powerful man, and this process continued to be multiplied. Family was a model for the state, and Gṛihapati was a model for the king. Thus, this process of evolution was the main cause of the origin of state. The origin of state from the process of historical evolution is apparent from the fact that the fundamental thing in a republican state was the Kula.

According to the organic theory, the state is living organism possessing organs each of which performs a specialised function and is subject to development and decay. The organs are dependent on each other for their existence. The state consists of seven elements, and each of them performs a specialised function, all contributing to its common well being. The epic³⁹ regards these elements as the Aṅgas. This implies that the organs are comparable to the limbs of the body, which cannot work independently, and even a minor defect in any of them may create trouble in the functioning of the body. So, all should be carefully protected, because dismemberment of the elements results in the destruction of the state, and their conglomeration strengthens it.

Constituents of the State

The theorists of the Mahābhārata discuss this problem like other political thinkers and define the state. Etymologically, the term Rājya is derived from the word Rājan with the affix 'Ya', which means the Bhāva or Karma (activity)

of the king. The Rājan is one, who pleases the subjects, so, in this sense, the word 'Rājya' denotes all the activities by a king for the happiness of his people. He alone cannot do this work, so he needs some assistants. Hence, all the agencies which assist him in this respect come within the fold of state, such as the king, ministers, territory-cum-population, forts, treasury, army and allies.

Though the epic refers to the Saptāṅga, yet its approach to the subject is not systematic and analytical. It contains two terms in order to denote the elements of state, namely Aṅga⁴⁰ and Prakṛiti,⁴¹ the latter one has a deeper meaning than the former, because it denotes the organisational element or the form, but the latter denotes compactness and necessity of the elements in an organic sense.

The Śāntiparva refers to the seven elements of state⁴² but it does not enumerate them in the same order as mentioned in other works like those of the Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra and the Manusmṛiti.⁴³ In it, the traditional order has been altered as it enumerates them in this order—Ātman (king), Amātya, Kosha, Daṇḍa, Mitra, Janapada and Pura.⁴⁴ Again these are enumerated in a different order—the Mitra, Amātya, Pura Rāshṭra, Daṇḍa, Kosha and the Mahipati.⁴⁵ It seems that in the views of the theorists of the epic all the elements are of equal importance, so they may be placed in any order.

The epic refers twice to the Ashtātmaka Rājyaṁ⁴⁶ or the state consisted of eight elements, but no-where in it the 8th element has been mentioned. The commentary of Vādirāja⁴⁷

40. ŚP. 59.51 ; 308.153-155.

41. Ibid. 121.46.

42. Ibid. 69.62-63 ; 59.51.

43. K.A. 6.1, Manu 9.294.

44. ŚP. 69.62-63.

45. Ibid. 308, 153-155.

46. Ibid. 122.8, Āraṇyaka. 9.8.

47. Āraṇyaka. C.N. on 9.8, p. 151.

refers to the guilds of the citizens as the eighth Aṅga of the state. But, it does not appear to be logical as these are included in the Rāshṭra. Due to lack of information, it is impossible to say anything regarding the eighth element of the state. Out of the seven elements, the Svāmin, Amātya, Kosha and Bala⁴⁸ have been discussed elsewhere in this work the remaining ones viz. the Janapada, Durga, and Mitra we propose to discuss in the following pages.

Janapada is an essential element of the state because a king cannot rule over a barren land. The epic contains different terms for it such as Janapada,⁴⁹ Rāshṭra,⁵⁰ Vishaya,⁵¹ and Deśa,⁵² and according to Amarakośa, all these are synonymous terms. The epigraphic references denote that these were used to mean different divisions of territory of a state, but in the epic, there is no such differentiation, and all are used in the sense of the territory of a state as a whole. These stand not only for the territory, but for the population also, so, by these, we should mean the inhabited territory. Land and people are the main elements of a state, so, the former should be very fertile; covered with forests, and watered by rivers. There should be suitable places for establishing cities and villages, and it should be provided with the means of communications. Regarding the people, the epic asserts that they should be hard working, brave, followers of the Dharma, and of good moral character. This type of land, inhabited by such type of people, enriches the state.

But, are land and people sufficient for a state? Does it prosper without being well administered? The theorists are of the opinion that it cannot prosper where the people are suffering from internal enemies of the country.⁵³ It is

48. Chapters 5, 7, 9 and 12 respectively.

49. Virāṭa. 1.9.

50. Āraṇyaka. 36.28.

51. Ibid. 113.15; Virāṭa, 6.9.

52. Āraṇyaka. 129.3.

53. ŚP. 89.13-14.

the king's duty to exterminate them. He should give his attention to this fact that beggars and dacoits must not reside in his territory, as these harass the people, and cause sufferings to them.⁵⁴ He should allow only such persons to reside in his state, who have compassion for all the Jivas, and cause its prosperity.⁵⁵

Is internal security the only condition for the people's prosperity? The epic instructs the kings to protect land and people from external aggressions, so that they may attempt peacefully for the realisation of a happy and prosperous life. He should engage his people in Vārtā for economic prosperity. But, how is it possible? He has to do many things for this by providing them with the means of irrigation, and extending financial loans to them. Nārada advises Yudhishtira to excavate large tanks in his state, and not to realise high rated taxes.⁵⁶ The king should be very affectionate to his people. The epic considers 'Sphitajanapada' as sign of prosperity of the king. He having such a territory strengthens his position⁵⁷ as it is a territory rich in material prosperity and inhabited by good people. It advances some examples of ideal territories ruled by ancient kings, as for example, the territory ruled by the Chedi king Vasu Uparichara was very fertile. It had abundance of cattle wealth, and inhabitants were the followers of Dharma.⁵⁸

Forts were very useful for the defence of the country, hence these also were considered as an element of the state. The epic refers to the military forts and fortified cities for the country's defence.

The Mahābhārata refers to six types of forts namely the

54. ŚP. 89.13-14.

55. Ibid. 89.21.

56. Ibid. 89.24.

57. Ibid. 95.3-5.

58. Ādi. 57.1-12.

Dhānvan, Mahīdurga, Giridurga, Manushyadurga, Abdurga, and the Vanadurga.⁵⁹ The first three types were built in deserts, on the plain land and on mountains respectively. The Manushya Durga seems to be a fort or military establishment formed with the fourfold army at a particular place, which may be equated with the present day's military cantonments. The 5th and 6th types were built on Islands or were surrounded with water, and were built in forests respectively. Kauṭilya⁶⁰ refers to only four types and excludes the Mahīdurga and Manushyadurga but Manu⁶¹ mentions all the six types.

A question arises as to how these should be built and what should be their planning? Kauṭilya⁶² has discussed this matter in detail, but the epic furnishes some general outlines that these should be built on suitable places, and must be provided with the defensive measures like the moats on all sides, which should be filled with water, dangerous fish, bushes and Trisūla like devices, so that the foes may not cross them to reach the forts.⁶³ These should be fortified with strong walls on all sides, provided with gateways and Toranas. Towers should be built on upper portions of walls, and holes should be made into them for discharging arrows on the enemy from a long distance. Mechanic war-machines like the Śataghnis should be fitted on high walls for the protection of forts.⁶⁴

Only the external defensive measures are not enough to protect them, so a king should provide them with other defensive means. The stores, arsenals, military barracks,

59. ŚP. 87.5.

60. K.A. 2.3.

61. Manu. 7.70.

62. K.A. 2.3.

63. ŚP. 69.41.

64. Ibid. 54-55.

war offices and other establishments also should be built inside them. For the adequate supply of water, wells should be dug out, fuels, foodgrains, fats, medicines, weapons etc. should be collected and stored in a large quantity.⁶⁵ Adequate steps should be taken to guard against conflagration⁶⁶ and espionage⁶⁷ as these two cause immense loss to life and property. The acrobats, dancers and singers, during the normal times should be patronised, but during the times of external invasions they should be expelled from the forts, so that the espionage may be checked and adequate defensive measures may be taken.⁶⁸

It is possible for the foes to capture some of the forts in order to utilise them as bases of their operation, so the epic instructs a king to destroy such forts within his territory, before they are occupied by the enemies.⁶⁹

The forts are so useful that a king taking shelter in a fort and having only one wing of the army, may harass the foe even superior to him in military strength.⁷⁰ The Paurava king Samvaraṇa being defeated and expelled by the Pañchālas from his own territory, took shelter in a fort situated on the banks of the Indus river, and operating from there being assisted by his priest Vāśishṭha, re-occupied his state.⁷¹ On account of the utility of the forts, Nārada has advised Yudhisṭhira to provide them fully with all provisions.⁷²

Analogous to Durga, the Mahābhārata refers to Pura,

65. ŚP. 69.44, 51, 54-57.

66. Ibid. 69.45-47.

67. Ibid. 69.49.

68. Ibid. 69.58.

69. Ibid. 69.39.

70. Ibid. 58.18.

71. Ādi. 89.31-42.

72. Sabhā. 5.25.

which is the fortified capital city and is the centre of administration. The former has more concern with the military affairs and the defence of the country but the latter is related to the capital of state. The king resided in it, so it also was well fortified. It should be built on a site where all provisions and amenities are available (Sarvasampat Pradhāne).⁷³ It should be surrounded with moats and ramparts. Inside it many other buildings should be built as mentioned earlier.⁷⁴ The epic refers to forts which were well fortified such as Dvārakā⁷⁵ in Saurāshtra, Hastināpura⁷⁶ in the Kuru country and Girivraja⁷⁷ in the Magadha Rāshtra. Excavations conducted at some ancient sites have revealed the truth that the forts and cities were well fortified and served as the successful means for the defence of the country.

The ally seems to be a strange element in the body of the state, but even nowadays, he plays an important role in friendly states.

The epic contains three important terms for an ally, namely the Mitra, Suhrita and Sahāya. Suhrita is one, who is the well wisher, and Sahāya is one who helps or assists. But, who is the real ally? The epic asserts that the real ally is one in whom one may have confidence as in his father. So, faith is the main characteristic to be found in a real ally.⁷⁸

What is the necessity of an ally? A real ally protects and serves his counterpart even by sacrificing his life, so on

73. ŚP. 87.4.

74. Ibid. 87.6-14.

75. Āraṇyaka. Chapters. 15-16.

76. Ibid. 1.9.

77. Sabhā. Ch. 19.

78. Udyoga. 36.35.

account of this a king should make friends,⁷⁹ as it is a condition for the prosperity of his state.⁸⁰

How to make friends? A king with unstable mind cannot make friends, it is very difficult to win over persons having selfish motives and acting falsely⁸¹ so, it is necessary to be selfless, and honest to the persons with whom friendship is desired.

What are the characteristics of true friends? A king should make those persons as his friends who are of high birth, have wide knowledge, are experts in delivering speeches, handsome, honest, truthful, sweet in nature, hard-working, grateful, controller of senses, and industrious.⁸² Bhishma presents a very exhaustive list of demerits to be found in the persons with whom friendship should not be established, such as those who are greedy, cruel, do not follow the Dharma, are wicked, lazy, rigid in views, defamed, do not possess helping attitude and have not controlled their senses.⁸³ The king must not make such a person as his ally who is ungrateful. The story of "Gautama Brāhmaṇa and Rājadharmā Baka"⁸⁴ reveals the fact that ungrateful persons are so disliked that even the vultures do not like to eat their flesh. The ungrateful ally cannot gain fame in society, can never realise happiness, and suffers in the hell.⁸⁵

What is the basis of friendship? Friendship and enmity are not the affairs of permanent nature, these are ever changing on account of being based on the fulfilment of self interest.⁸⁶

79. Udyoga. 36.37.

80. ŚP. 11827, 119.19.

81. Ibid. 36.37. Udyoga. 127.34.

82. Ibid. 162.17-25.

83. Ibid., 162.6-16.

84. Ibid. Ch. 162.

85. Ibid. 167.19-22.

86. Ibid. 136.103-104, 130-135, 139-160.

Love and affection come to an end when the self-interest is achieved, and purpose is fulfilled. Besides this, the superior power also is the basis of friendship, as a weak one seeks friendship with stronger ones.⁸⁷ These things are well illustrated through the story of "King Drupada and sage Droṇa"⁸⁸ as the former refused the latter to recognise him as his classmate and friend on the ground that friendship is established with the equals in status. But sacrifice of self-interest is the main consideration of true friendship. The sermons of Vidulā to her son Sañjaya indicate that a true ally does not discard his partner even in the worst distress.⁸⁹ Such an ally is never satisfied in doing good to his friend and is equally sorry in his sorrows.⁹⁰

Regarding the types of allies, the epic mentions four types such as the natural friends ; friends acquired by conciliatory words, friends won by offering financial assistance and those drawn by one's own prowess.⁹¹ Besides these, it again mentions four types such as those who have the same goal to achieve, those who come to seek shelter, those who are natural friends and those who are acquired by offering something to them.⁹² Besides these four, there is a 5th type also and that is the Dharmātmā-Mitra or the righteous friend who follows the right path, and does not favour his friend in immoral acts.⁹³ Who is the best type of friend ? In the view of Bhīṣma, Bhajamāna and Sahaja types are the best allies, but the king should be always cautious from Kṛitrīma and

87. ŚP. 138.51.

88. Ādi. 122.1-9.

89. Udyoga. 134.4.

90. Ibid. 134.5.9.

91. Karna. 64.27.

92. ŚP. 81.3.

93. Ibid. 81.4-5.

Sahārtha types,⁹⁴ because they remain as friends only for the fulfilment of their self-interests.

Regarding the duties of allies it mentions that they should protect each other from destruction, and must tender mutual help during distress.⁹⁵ They should be sharers in happiness and sorrows of each other as due to this, material prosperity is achieved and protection is secured.⁹⁶ Good allies must be publicly praised for the acts they do. But after all, it warns the king that it is very disasterous not to have confidence in friends, but more disasterous is to have complete confidence in them because in both the cases there are dangers, so the middle-path should be followed.⁹⁷

Is it necessary to follow the advice given by the friends? Non-acceptance of advice by friends creates trouble for the king, and he can never achieve the goal, but the case is otherwise, when he accepts the advice given by his allies.⁹⁸

The predecessors of Kauṭilya and he himself, have discussed the comparative and relative importance of different elements of the state in detail.⁹⁹ But the epic does not discuss this problem in this way. Kauṭilya and Manu, however, have arranged the seven elements in this order viz. the Svāmī, Amātya, Janapada, Durga, Kosha, Daṇḍa an Mitra, and they are of the opinion that when calamities befall or deterioration sets in, each of the seven elements, those that befall each preceding one, are more serious for the state than those of

94. ŚP. 81.6.

95. Udyoga. 91.10-11 ; Karna. 81.7.

96. ŚP. 120.53.

97. Karna. 81.8-9 ; ŚP. 81.10-13.

98. Udyoga. 122.20-26.

99. K.A. 8.1.

each succeeding one.¹⁰⁰ Among these, according to Kautilya, the king is the brain in the body politic, and occupies the most important place among the constituents.

The epic furnishes a different view and does not regard any element as superior or inferior to each other, so, it does not arrange them in the traditional order. It has changed the sequence at one place, placing the Mitra at the head, and the king at the end of the order.¹⁰¹ It finds it impossible to consider that any one of the seven constituents excels others in merit, but at different times, a different element assumes importance over others, since that particular element is, in that particular condition, capable of serving the purpose in hand.¹⁰² Manu also has advanced the same view in contradiction with his earlier view.¹⁰³ The theorists of the Mahābhārata further hold that there is an organic unity among different elements and they must work unitedly and harmoniously towards one ideal.¹⁰⁴

Types of state

The Aitereya Br. refers to different types of state which existed in ancient India. The epic also contains references to them.

The Arājaka state is that where there is no ruling authority. It is a kingless state which is a curse to the people as they are without a protector, hence face many difficulties.¹⁰⁵ After the death of king Vichitravīrya, the Kuru country had become an Arājaka state as a result of which, people had to suffer much.¹⁰⁶ The epic refers to this type of state in the

100. K.A. 8.1., Manu. 9.225.

101. ŚP. 308.153-155.

102. Ibid. 308.155-156.

103. Manu. 9.297.

104. ŚP. 69.63 ; 308, 155-156.

105. Ādi. 99.40-41.

106. Udyoga. 145.23-27.

Śakadvīpa but there people are said to protect each other by discharging their duties.¹⁰⁷

Monarchy was the most prevalent type of Govt., and the epic discusses many things regarding it. In this type, sovereign power lies in the hands of an individual who is regarded as the supreme head of the state. Several sub-types of the monarchical states are referred to, and the biggest type was Sārvabhauma. Yayāti, Dambodbhava and Bharata¹⁰⁸ have been mentioned as Sārvabhauma kings, but as a matter of fact, they were kings of a small part of the Indian territory. The concept of Sārvabhauma was only an ideal which was never materialised. The Chakravartin kings have been mentioned as ruling over the Chakravartin kshetra. Kauṭilya refers to its boundary which includes the whole of India extending from the Himālayas to the southern ocean, and from the western ocean to the eastern one.¹⁰⁹ In the epic, Bhagiratha has been referred to as a Chakravartin king.¹¹⁰ The usual title of Chakravartin king is the Samrāt, which may be obtained by performing the Rājasūya, as it is based on the Kshatrasampad¹¹¹—military power. Jarāsandha has been referred to as the Samrāt who had defeated so many kings and was the sovereign king over all.¹¹² In the epic there are references to some Samrāts such as Yaunāśvī, Kārtavīrya and others.¹¹³ Yudhishthira also had to perform the Rājasūya for the attainment of the Samrāt¹¹⁴ title.

The Ādhipatyam type of state was that the sovereignty of which was accepted by other states which also offered tributes to the sovereign king. Such states retained their

107. Bhishma. 12.35-36.

108. Āranyaka. 129.4 ; Udyoga. 94.5 ; Ādi. 69.47.

109. K.A. 9.1.

110. Āranyaka. 106.39 ; 107.1.

111. Ibid. 12.12-13, 36.

112. Ibid. 13.7-8.

113. Ibid. 14.11.

114. Ibid. 12.9-11 ; 14-19 ; 13.60-67 ; 14.2.

internal autonomy. The Kurus had established such a state.¹¹⁵

In Dvairājya type there is rivalry between two kings who jointly rule¹¹⁶ it, hence the Āchāraṅga-sūtra instructs the Bhikshus not to visit such a state where there are troubles and insecurity.¹¹⁷ The epic furnishes an example of this type such as the state of Avanti which was ruled jointly by two brothers named Vinda and Anuvinda.¹¹⁸

The Ekarājyaṁ is the opposite form of Dvairājyaṁ, in which the state is not divided among many brothers and they are not made as joint rulers. It is ruled by a single person. Vidura has advised Dhṛitarāshṭra not to divide the state between his sons and the Pāṇḍavas but to coronate Yudhishṭhira for establishment of the Ekarājyaṁ.¹¹⁹

Yauvarājya is another type in which the prince has upper hand in administrative affairs. The king, wishing to retire from active life, coronates the crown prince on the throne, handing over all the administrative charges, hence, such type of state was known as Yauvarājya. This is also mentioned in the Āchāraṅgasūtra. Dushyanta has been referred to as having coronated his crown prince Bharata on Yauvarājya, and so was done by Śāntanu in case of his son Bhīshma.¹²⁰

In republican states, sovereign power was exercised not by an individual, but by many and was organised on the Kula basis. This type of state has been discussed elsewhere in his work.¹²¹

The Aitereya Br.¹²² refers to the Bhaujya type which existed

115. Ādi. 103.1.

116. K.A. 8.2.

117. Āchāraṅgasūtraṁ (Ed. Jacobi), 2.3.1.10, quoted by Jayaswal, Op.cit., p. 84.

118. Udyoga. 163.6, Droṇa. 52.17.

119. Āraṇyaka. 5.12-13.

120. Ādi. 69.44 ; 89.19 ; 94.38.

121. Infra. Ch. 6.

122. Ait. Br. 8.14.

in the south. Jayaswal on the basis of literary and epigraphic evidences has tried to show that in this type sovereignty rested in leaders.¹²³ The Bhojas have been referred to as the Sātvatas, who were a branch of the Yādavas at Dvārkā, where they had established a republican type of state. Kunti herself was the daughter of a Bhoja chief. In the Śātavāhana inscriptions there are references to the Bhojas and Mahā-bhojas as the high officers of state.

The states are classified on the basis of administrative set up also, such as Unitary, Federal and Confederate. In unitary type the whole territory was directly ruled by the king. The states were small, so it was easy to do so. Most of the republican states were of this type. In confederations, two states were joined together but they retained their sovereignty, and only foreign policy and defence were jointly looked after. The epic refers to the Kshudraka-Mālavas¹²⁴ together, so it seems that they had established a confederation. This is further proved with the help of the Greek sources. They have been referred to as having organised a confederation against Alexander.¹²⁵

Ends and functions of state

A perusal of different theories of the origin of state reveals that it originated for the protection of life and property of the people, but does it mean that it stands only for the police work? If not, then what are the ends that it should strive at? What are the functions to be discharged by it?

The foremost end of state is to protect the people by controlling evil doers. But the people cannot prosper without discharging their duties, so it is the end of the state to persuade all its subjects to perform their duties. It has to aim

123. Jayaswal, K. P. Op.cit., pp. 75-76.

124. Sabhā. 48.14.

125. Jayaswal, K. P. Op.cit., Pp. 58-59.

at higher targets. All these things are hampered without economic prosperity, so the kings should do more for economic well-being of their people, so that they may prosper. For this, they have to assist the agriculturists, artisans, industrialists and merchants in their economic undertakings. Is the promotion of Dharma and Artha sufficient? According to the theorists of the epic, these are meaningless unless their fruits are not utilised, so the Kāma is to be promoted by giving encouragement to arts like music, dance, drama, painting and sculpture in order to promote the æsthetic culture.

Our life is incomplete without attempts made for the attainment of Moksha-liberation from sorrows, but is it the end of the state to help the people in this respect? The epic does not refer to this but the general description shows that it is its duty to facilitate them to achieve that goal. It promotes the cause of Dharma, persuades the people to perform their duties and to follow the rules of morality. These are the factors that lead one to the attainment of liberation.

The welfare of people is the end of state. It stands for the fulfilment of fourfold objectives of human life. The king is like the parents of the people, so he has to nourish them like his own children.

State and religion

A perusal of the ancient history shows that administrative ideas and political considerations were deeply influenced by the religious ideas, and the priestly classes had hold over the kings. The question arises whether the Mahābhārata shows the influence of religion on politics or not, and if so, to what degree?

According to it, the Daṇḍa, Daṇḍanīti and their holder and regulator, all are of divine origin.¹²⁶ The religious colour of state is apparent from the fact the king had to protect and

126. Vide this Ch. Theory of divine origin of state.

regulate the Varṇa and Āśrama institutions which were of divine origin. But a perusal of Indian history shows that kings did not give emphasis on this matter, and more or less that was only a political ideal.

In the field of state's services, emphasis has been given on noble birth.¹²⁷ This notion naturally debars persons of low birth from the state's services. The Dvijas or the upper three Varṇas got preference on account of their high birth.

The influence of religion on state cannot be understood without knowing the hold of the Brāhmaṇas on politics. It is the king's¹²⁸ duty to protect and support them as they are the persons who preserve the Vedas which are roots of Dharma. Śivi, Pratardan, Ambarisha and Dyutimān¹²⁹ were the kings who had protected and served them well. But side by side, it also is to be noted that the epic instructs the kings to protect the people and tender help to them for their support, so this does not indicate that only the Brāhmaṇas are to be protected.

The kings had not to realise taxes from the Śrotriyas¹³⁰ and not to inflict corporal punishment¹³¹ upon them. This, to a little extent, seems to be the influence of religion on political ideas. But, it is to be remembered that all the Brāhmaṇas are not to be exempted from taxes.¹³² The epic instructs a king even to kill his Guru if he violates the rule of Dharma.¹³³ So, it is the state which is the supreme, and not the Brāhmaṇa.

Regarding the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas over other

127. *Infra*. Ch. 8.

128. ŚP. 98.10.

129. *Anuśāsana* (G.P), 137.5-15.

130. *Infra*. Ch. 9.

131. *Ibid*. Ch. 10.

132. *Ibid*. Ch. 10.

133. *Anuśāsana*. 35.1; 136.10.

Varnas, the epic considers the former as superior to them as they were created first by the Brahman, and are protectors of Dharmakosha, hence they are the eldest ones.¹³⁴

The influence of religion on administration is apparent from the fact that the assistance of the Brāhmaṇa to the Kshatriya is essential, without which, he cannot be successful.¹³⁵ In this connection, the necessity of the Purohita, as the chief adviser to the king, has been discussed well.¹³⁶ The final acceptance of Mantra was based on its approval by the priest, and he was the guide to the king. Is he bound to follow his advice? Is the Purohita unpunishable? The king has to accept his view by examining with the help of his wisdom and to punish him if he commits offences or violates the rules of Dharma.¹³⁷ It is the true picture of the state, which ultimately is not under the influence of religion.

The Brāhmaṇas regarded themselves as superior to the Kshatriyas because they were superior in spiritual knowledge, but the latter ones were strong in physical power.¹³⁸ The epic asserts that Tapa of the Brāhmaṇa is more powerful than the Tejas of the Kshatriya.¹³⁹ So, on account of this, it has been considered that the Brāhmaṇa is the king-maker. The person becomes a king, whom they wish to be so.¹⁴⁰ The Brāhmaṇa is the political asylum to the Kshatriya.¹⁴¹

134. ŚP. 73.4-7, 11 ; Anuśāsana 34.5-6, 10-12.

135. Anuśāsana. 137.12 ; ŚP. 329.50.

136. ŚP. Chapters 73-74 & Ch. 159.

137. Infra. See p. 116.

138. Anuśāsana. 34.15 ; 58.24, 34.35.

139. Ibid. 8.26.

140. Ibid. 33.16.

141. ŚP. 79.12-16.

But the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas was not accepted by all the Kshatriyas. The epic informs that the Kshatriyas are like herdsmen to the Brāhmaṇas, whose protection and well being are based on them.¹⁴² The king Kārtavīrya did not accept the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas because for protection and support they depended upon the Kshatriyas.¹⁴³ The king has to control those Brāhmaṇas with the help of Daṇḍa who are destructive to society.¹⁴⁴ The hollowness of their superiority has been revealed from the speech by Śarmishṭhā; the daughter of king Vṛishaparbā, delivered to Devayānī; the daughter of Śukra, "Sitting in a humbler place your father goes on flattering my father day and night. You are the daughter of him, who begs and flatters. I am the daughter of him who donates and is praised."¹⁴⁵ In spite of the scriptural prohibition, king Nahusha imposed taxes even on the sages, and king Pururvā confiscated the property of the Brāhmaṇas.¹⁴⁶

It is to be inquired whether the epic refers to the matters regarding struggles between the Brāhmaṇas and Kshatriyas for capturing political power or not. There are references to the armed conflicts between them, as for example, the massacre of the Kshatriyas for 21 times by Paraśurāma, but this was not motivated by any political consideration. The Mahābhārata mentions at least 5 different versions of the causes of the massacre.¹⁴⁷ The non-political nature of the

142. Anuśāsana, 8.27.

143. Ibid. 137.15-16.

144. ŚP. 56.22-27.

145. Ibid. 73.9-10.

146. Ādi. 70.17-19, 25-26.

147. To take revenge from the Haihayas who had killed the Bhārgavas for realising wealth from them (Ādi. Chs. 169 & 171), disunion or difference of opinion between the two (Anuśāsana. 56.2-2), traditional enmity between the two (Anuśāsana 56.4-9, Āraṇyaka, 117.5-15), theft of the cow

conflict is apparent from this fact that after massacring the Kshatriyas, he did not start a dynasty after his name. He did not occupy their territories, but offered to Kaśyapa, who later on, coronated the remaining Kshatriyas on thrones¹⁴⁸ to rule over the earth.

The epic refers to some other instances of the Brāhmaṇa-Kshatriya armed struggles, as for example, destruction of the Tālajaṅghas and Nipa Kshatriyas by Bhārgava and Āṅgiras Brāhmaṇas, Bhāradvāja had defeated the Vaihatavyas and the descendents of king Aila.¹⁴⁹ The extensive empire of Daṇḍaka Kshatriyas was destroyed by a Brāhmaṇa.¹⁵⁰ It is interesting to note that Kauṭilya also refers to the destruction of these Kshatriyas by the Brāhmaṇas.¹⁵¹ The murder of Veṇa by sages also was not inspired by any selfish political motive to gain power as they enthroned his as son king and did not occupy the throne for themselves.¹⁵² Droṇa's armed conflict with king Drupada was based on personal grounds.¹⁵³ Prior to the Śuṅgas, there are no references to the establishment of political power by the Brāhmaṇas and that also was for the protection of the nation. It was in accordance with the injunctions of the epic that a Brāhmaṇa could hold weapon for self-defence, or for eradicating evil from the Varnas or for destroying evil-doers when the Kshatriya is unable to perform these deeds.¹⁵⁴ It seems that these verses were added to the epic during the Śuṅga age.

It asserts that the Brāhmaṇas are dependent upon the

of Jamadagni by the sons of Kārtvīrya, murder of this sage by them (ŚP. 49.39-43) and lastly the ego of Kārtavīrya of his power (Anuśāsana. 137.2-20).

148. ŚP. 49.60-78.

149. Anuśāsana. 34.16.

150. Ibid. 153.11.

151. K.A. 1.5.

152. ŚP. 59.99-121.

153. Ādi. Chs. 121-122, 128.

154. ŚP. 79.31-36.

Kshatriyas for protection, livelihood, facilities for studies and penance, and the latter ones are dependent upon the former for guidance, thus, this results in prosperity of the nation. Sage Dālva said to Yudhisṭhira that the Brāhmaṇas and Kshatriyas are so mixed and inter-dependent that they cannot be separated from each other (Samsṛiṣṭa), further, he says that these two, meeting together produce good results, and destroy the foes, as the fire and wind combined together destroy the forest.¹⁵⁵ They are endowed with spiritual and physical powers respectively, and having mutual relationship perform excellent works.¹⁵⁶ The "Discourse between Pururvā and Kaśyapa" throws light on the impotence of the mutual relationship between them as they grow and prosper mutually.¹⁵⁷ "The Muchukunda-Upākhyāna" gives emphasis on the same for the prosperity of the four Varṇas.¹⁵⁸

The king should perform sacrifices for the welfare of his state. Bhishma has advised Yudhisṭhira to perform Yajña and offer Dāna.¹⁵⁹ The Rājasūya and Aśvamedha sacrifices though performed for the attainment of the heaven, were actually aimed at the attainment of political supremacy. Besides this, it was regarded that the performance of Yajñas causes rain to fall on the earth, resulting in rich and prosperous harvest.¹⁶⁰ Besides the performance of sacrifices, the kings had to offer Dāna to worthy persons as this also leads them to the heaven. The Dānadharma parva in the Anuśāsana-parva discusses the matters regarding many aspects of Dāna, and mentions ancient kings who had offered their all possessions to others.

The kings had to visit the Tīrthas and take bath in the sacred rivers for purifications from sin. The Śāntiparva

155. Āraṇyaka. 27.10-11, 14.

156. Āraṇyaka. 27.17 ; Anuśāsana. 34.3-4, 23-24.

157. ŚP. Ch. 74.

158. Ibid. Ch. 75.

159. Anuśāsana. 59.20-21.

160. ŚP. 121.34-38.

contains a story of king Janamejaya, who being assisted by sage Indrota went on pilgrimage in order to be purified from the sin incurred by killing a Brāhmaṇa. This clearly shows the influence of religious belief on the political ideas. Such an impure king like Janamejay was dethroned by the people, and was enthroned only after visit to the Tirthas.¹⁶¹

The king has to create such a peaceful condition in the country, so that, the Tāpasas may perform their penance peacefully, and doing so, he gets some portion of merit gained by them.¹⁶² The doctrine of Karman has left its mark on this point of the transfer of a share of the merit to the king by the sages, but it was also regarded that if he misgoverns, then he would get the sin of the crimes committed by the subjects, and this also was another corollary of the same doctrine.¹⁶³ The epic instructs the king to have faith in Tāpasas, to go to the Āśramas, and have discussions with them on religious matters.¹⁶⁴ Besides this, the material possession of the Tāpasas are not to be confiscated even during economic distress, or cannot be captured as the booty of war, but this rule was not always observed as king Divodāsa in course of his military campaign, had captured even the materials meant for Agnihotra, but due to that act he was insulted.¹⁶⁵

The rules of taxation also show that state was influenced by religious ideas, as the Drotriyas were exempted from taxes on the ground that they cultivated the Vedic studies and preserved the Vedas. The idea of Aparigraha was also responsible in this respect as they did not possess more materials, and were not engaged in productive activities. The idea of the non-confiscation of property of the Brāh-

161. ŚP. Chs. 146-148.

162. Ādi. 37.20-24.

163. Altekar, A., S., op.cit. p. 56.

164. ŚP. 92.46-46 ; 87.25-28.

165. Ibid. 97.20-21.

maṇas and Tāpasas also was influenced by the same religious idea.

The judiciary also is not free from the religious influences, as 'Dharma' or Law has been regarded as of the divine origin. Besides this, Brāhmanaṇas and Tāpasas have been exempted from corporal punishment, and some times, they have been considered as unpunishable.¹⁶⁶ The Dharmasūtrakāras like Gautama, Baudhāyana and Vāśiṣṭha plead the cause of non-corporal punishment for the Brāhmanaṇas.¹⁶⁷ But the other side of the picture reveals the real character of the Indian judiciary. The Vedas only are not the sources of Dharma but the Sadāchāra and Parishad also play important roles in the formulation and modification of law. The Brāhmanaṇas and Tāpasas are not always unpunishable. They may even be killed, if they break the law and act against the interest of the state,¹⁶⁸ so, these things indicate that ultimately the state is the supreme body, and as far as its interest is concerned, it is not influenced by religious considerations.

The military system also seems to be influenced by religious considerations. The duty of the Kshatriyas has been sanctioned by the scriptures that they should fight and protect the people. Some religious rites were to be performed for the achievement of success on battlefield. The C-in-C was consecrated with fixed rituals. More than this, fighting on the battlefield has been regarded as the performance of sacrifice and it has been presumed that the soldiers go to the heaven who sacrifice their life while fighting on the battlefield.¹⁶⁹ It is the performance of sacrifices, observance of Tapa, offering of charity, which serves as a source of merit for those who follow the Yuddha-dharma.¹⁷⁰ It has been asserted that it

166. ŚP. 56.31-32, 77.14.

167. GDS. 12.46-47; DS. 1.10.18.17-18; VDS. 5.1ff.

168. Āranyaka, 34.20, 51.15-16; ŚP. 99.12-43.

169. ŚP. 99.12-43.

170. Ibid. 99.45-46; Stri. 2.11.

is really the Kāla, who kills the soldiers.¹⁷¹ The theory of Karman has been applied and it has been said that the soldiers who run away from the battlefield, go to hell and earn discredit in this world.¹⁷² Besides, it also has been viewed that while capturing the enemy's property, the possessions of the Brāhmaṇas and Tāpasas must be exempted.¹⁷³ So, all these show the influence of religious ideas and beliefs on the military system of the state.

The foreign policy also seems to be influenced by religious ideas and beliefs. The kings have to employ Paṇḍitas versed in sacred texts in order to invoke Kṛityās¹⁷⁴ for the destruction of the foes. In order to make the enemy's Kosha exhausted, and for making him weak, he should send priests to him for encouraging him for performing sacrifices.¹⁷⁵ Sage Kālakavṛikṣhiya had advised the Kośala king Kshemadarśin to do so for the destruction of the king of Mithilā. Furthermore, the theorists of the epic suggest the employment of persons to go to the enemy, and make him dis-interested from life, and finally to persuade him to offer Saṁnyāsa.¹⁷⁶ Outwardly, he should act as a pious man, but internally should act for the fulfilment of his motives.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, in order to find out his secrets, he should send spies in disguise of Pāshandāḥ and Tāpasas to his territory.¹⁷⁸ These indicate that the political ideas were influenced by religious considerations.

Superstitions also played an important role in the administrative affairs. The kings appointed fortune-tellers and astrologers.¹⁷⁹ Omens were kept in view on the occasion of

171. Bhīshma. 33.32-34.

172. ŚP. 96.1-4, 99.38-39, 100.4-5.

173. Ibid. 97.20-21.

174. Ibid. 104.43.

175. Ibid. 106.17, 20-21.

176. Ibid. 106.22.

177. Ibid. 58.20.

178. Ibid. 138.40.

179. Sabhā. 5.31 ; ŚP. 121.45-46.

the marching of army from the capital city.¹⁸⁰ The astrologers used to point out appropriate time for it, which was based on astrological calculations. These things clearly indicate the influence of superstitions on the affairs of state.

Nature and concept of state

The foregoing references show that state, though influenced by religious ideas and practices, is not a theocratic state, because a religious leader is not its head, but it cannot be considered as a secular state as secularism implies complete elimination of religious influence from the organised policies of state, but this is far from truth in case with the state in the epic. Its composers could not eliminate religious influences from policies of state as they were the Brāhmaṇas.

Regarding the class-character of the state, it is apparent that in the Mahābhārata it is a state dominated by the Brāhmaṇas and Kshatriyas. Though the Vaiśyas and Śūdras also were appointed in the state's services, yet the field was dominated by the Brāhmaṇas and Kshatriyas.

In real character, state in the epic is a welfare state which not only stands for police-work, but for all round prosperity of the people. Some western scholars have observed that empires in the east were mainly the tax-collecting institutions, and were not concerned with the works of the public utility.¹⁸¹ But, these observations are not true, as far as the Indian states are concerned. The state in the epic stands for the welfare of the people.¹⁸²

Regarding the concept of state, the Mahābhārata furnishes some interesting information. Though, it was regarded as

^{180.} ŚP. 103.6-15.

^{181.} Henry Main and T. H. Green as quoted by Saleatore, B.A., AIPTI, pp. 71-72.

^{182.} Infra. Ch. 5,

an institution organised and established for the welfare of the people, yet side by side, it was considered as a source of suffering on a permanent basis.¹⁸³ It causes less happiness but more sufferings, is transitory in nature, and does not cause peace to mind.¹⁸⁴ These are the real and natural observations regarding the state. Besides this, it has been observed that its affairs cannot be carried on by those, who are weak, and have not controlled their senses, so, it is a great burden to be carried on with difficulty.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, it has been regarded as a complicated mechanism, because, it is based on a purpose whose execution is very difficult.¹⁸⁶

183. Anuśāsana. 83.2.

184. ŚP. 308.152.

185. Ibid. 92.44.

186. Ibid. 53.21.

Chapter V

KINGSHIP

The king is an inevitable agency for the welfare of the people, who in the remote past had realised his importance for the protection of their social and economic institutions, as these were unsafe without a ruling authority to hold and inflict the Daṇḍa upon those who did not follow the rules of law. He is the root cause of all success and happiness, and creates spiritual atmosphere by protecting the Dharma. He is the person, who causes the development of arts and culture in his kingdom, so he is essential for all round development of the people. The Arājaka type of state is the most disastrous, so, the people have to appoint or select a king for their protection. The dialogue between Vasumanā and Vrihasapati¹ throws considerable light on the necessity of king for the protection of Lokadharma and people.

The epic illustrates the dire consequences arising from the non-existence of the king by presenting some ancient instances, such as disappearance of Indra² from the heaven, which had resulted in lawlessness, and again the death of Vichitravīrya³ also had created the same situation in the Kuru country as he had no issue to succeed him so the people suffered from draught, famine and disease. It considers the people without a king as a herd of cattle without the herdsman, and asserts that such people perish away very soon, so, the king is essential for their protection and prosperity.

Education and training to the princes

The welfare of people depends upon the nature of king,

1. ŚP. Ch. 68.
2. Udyoga. 10.43-47.
3. Ibid. 147.23-30.

hence the theorists of the epic are of opinion that they should be trained from the very beginning. Kauṭilya and Manu also advance the same view.⁴ After the performance of preliminary Saṃskāras their education was started at the age of five. They used to learn writing and counting, and when they became young, religious, literary and military education were imparted to them.

Kings had more concern with the military science, and the science of Govt. More emphasis was, therefore, given on these two branches of learning. The kings looked after the education and training of the princes at the capital city as it is evident from this fact that Bhishma had appointed Gautama to instruct the Kaurava-Pāṇḍava princes at Hastināpur.⁵ But, if necessary, they were sent to the Āśramas of the competent teachers, who imparted higher training to them. The Kaurava-Pāṇḍava princes were sent to the Āśrama of Droṇa Bhāradvāja for receiving higher education in military science.⁶ They were trained in archery, horse and elephant riding, sword-handling, chariot-driving, and in fighting on different types of battlefields in different climatic and geographical conditions. Arjuna had specialised in all branches of military science.⁷ After the termination of training period, the teachers examined the ability and efficiency of students as the epic informs that Droṇa took practical examination of princes in archery in which Arjuna was found as the most qualified student.⁸

The kings had to deal with judicial, taxational, religious and cultural problems, and accordingly the epic suggests that the princes should be trained in many other branches of learning also, such as the Nītiśāstra, Itihāsa, Purāṇa, Vedas

4. K. A. 1.4 ; Manu. 7.39.

5. Ādi. 119.43.

6. Ibid. 121.1-2, 122.38-40.

7. Ibid. 123.7-8, 40-41.

8. Ibid. 123.45-66.

and the Vedāṅga, Yuktisāstra (Logic), Śabdaśāstra (Philology or grammar), music and other arts, Ākhyāna (stories)⁹ and Charita or life sketches of ancient kings. King Rītuparṇa of Ayodhyā was expert in Aksha and Saṁkhyā.¹⁰ The former stands for dicing or it may stand for "Accounts" also as the term Akshapaṭala is used in the sense of the office of the Accountant. The term Saṁkhyā denotes that he was expert in Statistics or in counting. Sahadeva also has been referred to as an expert in account-keeping and counting.¹¹

After the educational period was over, the princes were brought to the capital city, where they, before a gathering of the guests and other persons, exhibited their skill in different branches of military science as it is mentioned in connection with the Kaurava-Pāṇḍava princes, who after the completion of their education, had exhibited their skill before the gathering of the above mentioned persons.¹²

A large number of inscriptions which were inscribed during the compositional period of the Mahābhārata indicate that kings were trained in many branches of learning, such as in military, administrative, religious, literary and artistic subjects. The Hāthigumphā Inscription of Khāravela, the Giranara inscription of Rudradāmana and Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta throw considerable light on this matter.¹³

The ancient Indian theorists are of the opinion that all knowledge is useless, if the king has not controlled his senses. Such a king cannot please his subjects, but is it possible for him to have control on the senses without proper training from the very boyhood? Kauṭilya thinks that the princes should be kept under the charge of those persons, who are of good character in order to train them for controlling their

9. Ādi. 102.15-18 ; Ānuśāsana. 107.138-142.

10. Āraṇyaka. 70.21-23.

11. Virāṭa. 3.6-11.

12. Ādi. Chapters, 125-126.

13. Sircar, D. C. SI, pp. 214ff, 175ff, 262ff respectively.

senses. The epic informs that the king who has not controlled his senses perishes away like an earthen pot dropped into the water.¹⁴ So, they should control their senses. For this, they had to observe a celibate life having strict control over the senses for many years under the supervision of competent and good-charactered teachers.

The Mahābhārata does not refer to the time table to be followed by the princes and the period of education, but there is a reference to show that they got efficient training in military science and in other branches of learning as well. The sons of Draupadī got military training from Bhīṣma for a period of 12 years.¹⁵

The crown prince and other princes

If the king had only one son, there was no question of selection of the crown prince, otherwise, the eldest son was selected for the purpose. But, there are many cases to show that the claim of the eldest son was set aside, and the younger or the youngest son was selected as the crown-prince¹⁶. Kautīlya thinks that the crown prince should be married at the age of 16, and coronated as the heir-apparent,¹⁷ but the epic does not furnish such information. The prince was trained in different branches of administration. In the absence of king he acted on his behalf. He held responsible posts in administration, and performed many works of responsibility. King Virāṭa had made the crown prince Bhūmīnījaya incharge of the defence of the capital city on the occasion of his expedition for releasing his cows from the Trigartas and Kauravas.¹⁸

14. Āraṇyaka. 239.3 ; Udyoga. 33.43, 73-74.

15. Drona. 9.47-48.

16. Infra. Pp. 156-158.

17. K.A. 1.4.

18. Virāṭa. 33.9-11.

What happened to those princes whose fathers passed away leaving them as minors? How were they educated? There are many evidences to show that the senior members of the royal family looked after the state as the regents, and handed over the administrative charge to the princes when they were able to carry on the affairs efficiently. It is apparent from this fact that after the death of Śantanu, Bhīṣma looked after the state's affairs as his sons Chitrāṅgadā and Vichitravīrya were minors, and at appropriate time he coronated the former as king.¹⁹ After the premature death of Chitrāṅgada, he coronated Vichitravīrya as king, and as his regent, he looked after the state's affairs.²⁰ Bhīṣma is again referred to as acting the regent over the minors Dhṛitarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu.²¹ The ministers also looked after the administrative affairs, when the prince was minor, as Nala's ministers are referred to as having protected the prince and managed for his education when he was traceless.²² After the death of Parīkṣhita his ministers coronated his infant son as king, and looked after administrative affairs.²³

Law of succession

Though the eldest son was regarded as the successor, but a question arises whether in all the cases was he liable to be selected as the crown-prince? What happened to other princes? Was the daughter to be coronated, if the king had no son? Was the empire to be divided in case the eldest son was not accepted as the undisputed heir-apparent?

In case of the ordinary families, property was divided among all the brothers according to the Hindu law, but in

19. Ādi. 95.2-5.

20. Ibid. 95.12-14.

21. Ibid. Ch. 102.

22. Āraṇyaka. 57.19-20.

23. Ādi. 40.5-9.

case of monarchy, the law of primogeniture was in practice. It was realised that the division of the empire among different brothers would make it weak, and lead to destruction, so, generally, the eldest son was coronated as the king. The epic presents many instances of this rule, such as king Dushyanta of Kuru dynasty and kings Parikshita and Brihadāśva of Ayodhyā had coronated their eldest sons Bharata²⁴, Śala and Kuvalāśva²⁵ respectively as kings. The epic presents a technical term “Krama prāptam rājyaṃ” indicating the legal succession of the eldest son to the throne of his father, and king Nala was such a person who had got the state²⁶ according to the above mentioned rule. This principle of succession was so deep rooted that the people resented against the decesion of king Yayāti, who violating the rules of succession, had decided to coronate Puru, the youngest son as his successor.²⁷ The story of Bhīshma’s resolve to remain unmarried throughout his life observing celibacy also reveals that generally the eldest son was the legal heir to the throne²⁸. Kṛishṇa’s advice to Karna to go to the side of the Pāṇḍavas, and become the king on account of his being the eldest son of Pāṇḍu,²⁹ indicates that the eldest son was considered to be the legal successor to his father. The Mahābhārata presents many examples of the observance of this rule such as kings Brīddhakshatra and Gādhi had selected their eldest sons Jayadratha and Viśvāmitra respectively as their successors.³⁰ Sahasrachintya, the Kekaya king, had coronated his eldest son as king.³¹ Dushyanta and Suhotra, the eldest sons of Ilin and Bhūmanyu

24. Ādi. 69.44.

25. Āraṇyaka. 190.43, 193.7-8.

26. Ibid. 61.45-47.

27. Ādi. 80.12-15.

28. Ibid. 94.84-87 ; Udyoga. 145.16-19.

29. Udyoga. 138.6, 21, 27.

30. Droṇa. 121.17.23 ; Śalya. 39.12-16.

31. Āśrama. 26.6-7.

respectively, became kings after the death of their fathers.³² Among the Kurus, it was the family tradition that the eldest son would succeed the father.³³

This rule was not observed in all conditions. The claim of the eldest son was set aside, if he was disobedient to his father or was physically handicapped or very wicked. Though Yadu, was the eldest son of Yayāti, yet he was deprived of his right to succeed his father on account of being disobedient to him and the youngest son Puru was declared to be the successor as he obeyed him.³⁴ The disobedient sons of Yayāti were expelled from the state.³⁵ Kautīlya advances the view that the eldest son should be coronated as king, but he thinks that the disobedient sons should be expelled from the kingdom.³⁶ The epic also informs that king Sagara had expelled his only son Asamañjas depriving him of his right to the throne because he was a wicked prince.³⁷

The eldest son, even being competent, and obedient to the father, was not considered to be the legal successor, if he was physically handicapped or suffered from some incurable disease, as Devāpi,³⁸ the eldest son of Pratīpa, and Dhritarāshtra,³⁹ the eldest son of Pāṇḍu could not become kings, as the former was suffering from skin disease, and the latter was blind.

There are many instances to show that in case of king's death without any issue, his younger brother was coronated as king. The Aikshvāku king Śala was killed, so the people coronated his brother Dala as king⁴⁰ as the former

32. Ādi. 89.15, 19-22.

33. Ibid. 107.23-33 ; Udyoga. 146.29, 32.

34. Udyoga. 147.11-13.

35. Ādi. Chapters 79-38 ; Udyoga. 147.11-13.

36. K. A. 1.16.

37. Āraṇyaka. 106.33-38.

38. Udyoga. 147.12.28.

39. Ādi. 102.19, 129.14 ; Udyoga. 147.20-23.

40. Āraṇyak. 190.43, 69.

was issueless. Likewise, Vichitravīrya also became king after the death of his elder brother Chitrāṅgada because he had passed away without any issue.⁴¹

What happened when the son was expelled or predeceased his father? In this situation, the grandson was coronated as a king, for we are told that Anśumān was coronated as a king by his grandfather Sagara, because he had expelled his son Asmañjasa.⁴² Yudhishṭhira also had coronated Parīkshita, his grandson, as king because he had no son.⁴³

There are evidences to show that sometime, all the sons of a king were entitled to rulership. The epic informs that king Vasu Uparichara had coronated his all the five sons named Vṛihadratha, Pratyagraha, Kuśāmba, Mavella, and Yadu as the sovereign kings,⁴⁴ on different parts of his empire. Many times, Bhishma and others have been referred to as requesting Duryodhana and Dhṛitarāshṭra to return half of the state to the Pāṇḍavas as the share of their father to them.⁴⁵ This also indicates the same thing. King Ikshvāku had consecrated his one hundred sons to rulership,⁴⁶ but, this practice was not so popular, as it weakened the state, so, generally, the law of primogeniture was observed. What happened to other brothers, if this rule was observed? In that case, other brothers were appointed to responsible posts. Yudhishṭhira had appointed his brothers on different posts such as Bhīma as the crown prince, Nakula as the defence minister, Arjuna as the C-in-C and Sahadeva as his private secretary and officer-in-charge of his personal security.⁴⁷

In Dvairājya type of state, two brothers ruled over it

41. Ādi. 90.52-53, 96.7-12.

42. Āraṇyaka. 106.33-38.

43. Mahāprasthānika. 1.7.

44. Ādi. 57.28.30.

45. Udyoga. 20.

46. Āśvamedhika. 4.3-4.

47. ŚP. 41.8-14.

jointly and such a state existed in Avanti.⁴⁸ King Bhaṅgaśvan, after change in his sex, had requested all his 100 sons to rule jointly with love and affection. In the form of woman (after his sex change) she gave birth to another 100 sons, and they also were made kings along with the former 100 sons.⁴⁹ Perhaps, this joint rule was the cause of the establishment of the Kula saṁghas giving birth to oligarchies. Kauṭilya approves this type of rule, in which, all brothers rule over the state jointly, and on that account the Kula saṁgha is invincible, as other brothers carry on the affairs of state when some of them are in danger.⁵⁰

The question arises as to what happened if the king had no son? If he had a daughter, then, was it possible for her to succeed him? The Hindu theorists do not allot share to the daughters in the parental property, hence, there is no question of their share in the kingdom. But the epic advances the idea that the daughter may succeed her father, if he has no son.⁵¹ Kauṭilya does not favour the daughter's succession to the throne, but instructs the king to coronate the son of daughter provided he is competent.⁵² The epic does not furnish even a single example of the daughter's succession to the throne of her father.

The most complicated problem arises when the king dies without any issue. During such a situation what is to be done or what is the remedy if he is too old to produce sons? Kauṭilya recommends that during such a situation, Niyoga Vidhi should be applied for giving birth to the successor to the throne.⁵³ The Mahābhārata also presents many examples of the application of Niyoga Vidhi for the same purpose. The death of Vichitravīrya without any heir had created such

48. Udyoga. 163.6; Droṇa. 52.17.

49. Anuśāsana. 12.19-23.

50. K.A. 1.16.

51. ŚP. 34.33.

52. K.A. 1.16.

53. Ibid. 1.16.

a problem in the Kuru family, so, in order to continue the dynastic line, Vyāsa, on the request of Satyavatī, begot three sons namely Dhṛitarāshṭra, Pāṇdu and Vidura from his wives.⁵⁴ After the massacre of the Kshatriyas by Paraśurāma, the Brāhmaṇas had sons from the wives of the Kshatriya-widowed queens, who were heirless.⁵⁵

Coronation

The Śatapath Brāhmaṇa discusses this matter in an exhaustive way but the epic furnishes only scanty references. Many technical terms and rites as referred to in former book are not mentioned in the latter one.

The description⁵⁶ of the coronation of Yudhisṭhira shows that the king sat on golden seat, being surrounded by his kinsmen, and near relatives, he touched auspicious things like white flowers, Svastika sign, rice and precious metals. After this, the subjects along with Purohita came to have his Darśana. All materials (Sarva-Saṁbhāra) to be used were collected for coronation ceremony, such as the sacred soil, precious metals, golden jars, flowers, paddy, milk of cow, sacred woods, honey, ghee and decorated conch-shells etc. The Purohita built a Vedī and the king along with the queen sat in front of it on a throne covered with a piece of white cloth or the lion-skin. The priest offered oblations into the fire with the recitations of sacred hymns. After this, sacred water was sprinkled by an elder, and good persons. In case of Yudhisṭhira's coronation, it was Lord Kṛishṇa who sprinkled water with a decorated conch shell on his body, being followed by the subjects. Here, the word Sarvāḥ prakṛitayaḥ is very significant which shows that not only the

54. Ādi. 90.55-60.

55. Ibid. 58.1-12.

56. ŚP. Ch. 40.

Dvijas but the Śūdras also sprinkled water on the king's body. After this, he offered Dakṣiṇā to Brāhmaṇas.⁵⁷

There is a reference to the oath-taking ceremony in connection with the coronation of Prithu Vainya and that is termed as "Pratijñā". He took a pledge to follow the vedic injunctions, to act according to the rules of Daṇḍanīti, never to violate the rules of law, not to insult the Brāhmaṇas, and to serve the people⁵⁸ sincerely.

Requisites of king

The king should be very learned and well versed in Daṇḍanīti as well as in military science also. He should speak sweet words to attract others towards him, should be gentle, should offer gifts and perform sacrifices.⁵⁹ He should be physically and mentally strong.⁶⁰

The people make such a person as their protector who is efficient, noble, of pure heart, and is charitable.⁶¹ He should be a righteous person, must protect and nourish the people, should cultivate virtues like forgiveness, purity of ideas, patience, good will to others, and should follow the truth. He should be a person of high abilities, must listen to others, and should act according to the situations keeping in view the time and place factors.⁶² The epic further informs that a Dandavid (one who inflicts punishment properly) king can rule over the people well but an "Adaṇḍa (one who does not punish) king cannot check lawlessness in his state.⁶³

57. ŚP. Chapter 40.

58. Ibid. 59.112-120.

59. ŚP. 67.37-38, 69.31.

60. Ibid. 79.43.

61. Ibid. 94.27.

62. Ibid. 118.15-23.

63. Ibid. 92.45.

The Mahābhārata gives emphasis on the cultivation of wisdom, as it is the fundamental cause of king's success in both the worlds.⁶⁴ But how it is to be cultivated? It may be gained by serving the elders, having association with wise ones, studying the scripture and applying one's own mental faculties. The king knowing only a part of Dharma, cannot decide matters, so, he must cultivate wisdom to come out of dangers, in life.⁶⁵ The dharma cannot be decided either by logic or by intellect, so, both these must be applied in order to find out the course of action.⁶⁶

He has to possess and cultivate Śīla as it causes prosperity to him. The ancient kings like Prahāda, Māndhātā, Nābhāga and Janamejaya became very prosperous as they possessed and cultivated it.⁶⁷ What is Śīla? It consists of virtues like the cultivation of universal love, compassion, charity, performance of acts not injurious to any one, and works for the welfare of others.⁶⁸ How these constituents of Śīla may be cultivated? The epic considers Dharma, Satya, Sadāchāra, Bala and Lakshmī as the roots of Śīla.⁶⁹ It is possible that the Aśīla kings also may prosper, and Śīlavān king may decline, but these are temporary affairs, an Aśīlavān king surely declines and a Śīlavān king prospers.⁷⁰

The king should be Anāgatavidhātā and Pratyutpannamati⁷¹, i.e. should have power to guess the dangers to come and adopt means for their removal immediately. The story of three fish in a tank indicates that such a king prospers but the Dīrghasūtrī one (who does not act promptly) perishes away soon, so the epic instructs the king to be intelligent

64. ŚP. 140.4-7.

65. Ibid. 140.8.

66. Ibid. 140.11-118.

67. Ibid. 124.14-19.

68. Ibid. 124.64-66.

69. Ibid. 124.60.

70. Ibid. 124.64-66.

71. Ibid. 137.1.

enough to guess dangers to come in future and must take adequate steps to remove them.⁷²

Regarding his nature, the theorists of the epic suggest that he should be neither too harsh nor too sweet, but moderate⁷³, and should follow the middle path.⁷⁴ Kautilya also has expressed similar view.⁷⁵

Like Kautilya, the Mahābhārata also has instructed the the kings to discard the Saptadoshas or Vyasanas which are enumerated as indulgence in sexual enjoyment, hunting, drinking, dancing, harshness of speech, inflicting improper punishment and misuse of wealth.⁷⁶ He should cultivate seven kingly virtues viz. to love the subjects like mother, protect and show compassion like father, guide them to Dharma like guru, protect like an efficient protector, destroy the foes like the fire, show generosity like Kuber and control the evil-doers like the Yama.⁷⁷

The epic mentions that all the virtues to be found in a king were possessed by king Yudhishthira, as he followed the truth, acted according to the injunctions of the Śāstras, nourished the subjects well, respected and served his kinsmen, and supported the helpless ones.⁷⁸

Mode of the king's conduct

The king's mode of conduct causes prosperity to the people. The epic enumerates 36 virtues to be followed by him.⁷⁹ It suggests that a king having no ill-will

72. ŚP. Ch. 136.

73. Ibid. 148.20..

74. Ibid. 140.31-32.

75. K.A. 1.3.

76. Udyoga. 33.73-74.

77. ŚP. 137.99-102.

78. Udyoga. 147.32-33.

79. ŚP. 71.1-11.

towards others and having controlled his senses prospers more.⁸⁰ He, by following a good way of life, gets assistance from his subjects, even if kosha is exhausted.⁸¹

Besides referring to his virtues, and mode of conduct, it refers to the disqualifications to be found in him. It asserts that the people do not realise happiness and prosper under the rule of a wicked king, as the laws of morality, means of livelihood and other things cease to exist during the reign of such a king, as the residents of Hastināpur felt during the reign of Duryodhana.⁸² The people fear from a wicked king like a deer from a hunter, and such a king is discarded very soon, hence he cannot enjoy the prosperity of his state.⁸³ A greedy and wicked king cannot please his subjects.⁸⁴ The wicked king, who does not follow the injunctions of the Śāstras, perishes away soon.⁸⁵ Veṇa was killed because he caused sufferings to the people, and violated the injunctions of the Śāstras.

The epic has enumerated 14 kinds of faults to be found in kings⁸⁶ which destroy even the well-established empire, so it instructs them to discard these faults. What is the remedy to remove them? For this, they have been advised to introspect, and always to think over the works to be done by them. For knowing the people's opinion about their conduct, they should despatch spies among them and after knowing them, they should attempt to remove their faults.⁸⁷

The king's mode of conduct causes prosperity to the state but that also is based on the proper realisation of Trivarga.⁸⁸

80. Ibid. 93.11.

81. Udyoga. 38.34 ; Anuśāsana. 61.38-41.

82. Āraṇyaka. 1.10-19.

83. Udyoga. 34.24-25.

84. ŚP. 57.27 ; Anuśāsana. 61.37-39.

85. ŚP. 94.4.

86. Sabhā. 5.96-93.

87. ŚP. 90.14-15.

88. Ibid. 123.1-2.

But what it is and what is its purpose? There are four-fold objectives of the human life namely the Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksha, and the first three of these constitute the Trivarga. Should the king indulge himself in one of them or should he realise them properly?

The constituents of Trivarga are closely related to each other, as Dharma is the means to get the Artha, and the latter is a means for the realisation of Kāma, the body is protected with the help of Dharma, but it cannot be realised without the Artha.⁸⁹ The person, who realises the Kāma⁹⁰ attempts to get the Artha with the means of Dharma.

The Mahābhārata by presenting a dialogue between sage Kāmandaka and king Āṅgirashṭha, advances the view that the three constituents of Trivarga must be equally realised, maintaining a balance among them all.⁹¹ It has been asserted that the person who realises only the Kāma, discarding the Dharma and Artha, is deprived of wisdom.

The Dharma and Artha are closely related to one another, a poor man cannot realise Kāma in lack of Artha, and an Adharmī cannot obtain the former, but it is not beneficial to indulge in the Artha alone, neglecting the Dharma. The Artha should be gained by adopting proper methods, and the Kāma should be realised keeping in view the Dharma and Artha. These should not be neglected while indulging in the enjoyment of material life.⁹² Vālmiki and Kauṭilya also advance the same opinion that Trivarga should be equally realised.⁹³

An efficient and active king can set an example to his servants, and may discharge his duties efficiently, but is it possible for him to regulate his life without following a regular

89. ŚP. 123.6.

90. Ibid. 123.3.

91. Ibid. Ch. 123.

92. Ibid. 161.23-26.

93. VR. Ayodhyā, 53.13, 100.62-63; K.A. 1.6.

and fixed routine ? So, he has to get up early in the morning and think over the matters of Dharma and Artha.⁹⁴ Kauṭilya also says so.⁹⁵ After that, he should listen to the persons who come to him and consult his ministers.⁹⁶ Kauṭilya also fixes this period for consultation with ministers⁹⁷ i.e. prior to 12 A.M. He has not to misuse his time and money in personal enjoyments and during that period he should look into the accounts of the state. Nārada has inquired from Yudhishthira whether did he follow this routine or not ?⁹⁸ Dhṛitarāshṭra advises Yudhishthira to look into the accounts of state prior to 12 A.M. and meet the ambassadors and spies in the evening.⁹⁹

Duties of king

The epic refers to the king's duties in many contexts, but the treatment of the subject is not systematic. For our convenience, these may be classified into many heads.

The existence of state depends upon the king, so it is his most essential duty to be very cautious for his personal safety, as many persons wish to kill him and capture the throne.¹⁰⁰ What are the things which endanger his safety ? These come from outside and from his own persons.¹⁰¹ The Arthaśāstra¹⁰² refers to the murder of kings by their own wives, sons, ministers and other near relatives, but such things have not been referred to by the epic except in case of a solitary instance of murder of the enemy of Dhṛiṣṭadyumna by his own minister.¹⁰³

94. Āśrama. 10.7 ; Sabbā. 5.57.

95. K.A. 1.18.

96. Sabbā. 5.76.

97. K.A. 1.18.

98. Sabbā. 5-59, 62.

99. Āśrama. 10.5-6.

100. ŚP. 90.13, 91.36, 95.7.

101. Sabbā. 5.58.

102. K.A. 1.16.19.

103. Āraṇyaka. 278.7-9, 283.3-11.

The dissatisfied soldiers also are a source of danger to him, so he should attempt to please them. Kauṭilya also regards "Sainyakopa" very disastrous to him.¹⁰⁴

Poisoning was an easy means to kill the kings, so it instructs them to be very cautious in this regard. They should appoint trustworthy persons who may take care of things to be used or consumed by them, such as edibles, perfumes and clothes. Nārada questions Yudhishṭhira whether he took such steps for his personal safety or not?¹⁰⁵ Dhritarāshṭra also advises him to be very careful for his personal safety.¹⁰⁶ Manu also expresses similar views.¹⁰⁷

The external dangers also are very disastrous so he must be very careful from his foes and should try to protect his own life even by surrendering his capital city and Koṣa to them as being protected, one may regain the lost things.¹⁰⁸

For taking adequate steps for personal safety, the epic instructs them to employ body-guards dressed in red uniforms (Raktābmaradharāḥ), well decorated (Svalaṁkrtāḥ) and having swords (Khaṅgahastāḥ) in their hands to protect them. Regarding this, Nārada inquires from Yudhishṭhira and further more, he puts question to him whether he had appointed physicians to examine his health or not?¹⁰⁹ Thus the kings had to take many measures for their safety and personal well-being.

It is the king's duty to protect his subjects from internal and external dangers. King Prithu Vainya was known as the Kshatriya and Rājā, as he protected them from destruction and pleased them.¹¹⁰ The discourse between Vasumanā and Brihaspati throws light on the point that the king should

104. Sabhā. 5.38-39, K.A. 8.5.

105. Ibid. 5.56.

106. Āśrama. 9.18-19.

107. Manu. 7.217-220.

108. ŚP. 129.6-8.

109. Sabhā. 5.77-80.

110. Udyoga. 130.29 ; ŚP. 129-130.

protect his subjects for their prosperity.¹¹¹ But what are the internal dangers to be removed? The robbers and dacoits are the anti-social elements who hamper social peace and economic prosperity, so, it is his duty to make them peaceful.¹¹² How he has to control or eradicate them? For this, he has to maintain a strong police force, as it is his duty to destroy the gangs of dacoits and robbers¹¹³, because he is the controller of the wicked ones.¹¹⁴ His most essential duty is to control the evil ones and nourish the good ones¹¹⁵ so, in order to do all these things, he should be always engaged in killing the robbers and dacoits which is the supreme duty¹¹⁶ to be discharged by him. Such a king has been regarded as the form of Kali in whose state the subjects are looted by dacoits, economic development is hampered, and the observance of religion, and cultivation of culture are stopped due to the acts of robbers.¹¹⁷ So, in order to eradicate all these sufferings, he should act like Yama, and must kill them mercilessly, otherwise, he is to be regarded as a black spot on the white fame of the Kshatriyas.¹¹⁸ The persons-in-charge of people's protection must roam within the empire everywhere to kill the thieves.¹¹⁹ Nārada inquires from Yudhishthira whether he had kept his eyes on the police officers or not, because these also set the culprits free by accepting bribes from them.¹²⁰ There are many illustrations in the Mbh. to show that the ancient kings like Yayāti and Dyumtasena had

111. ŚP. Ch. 68.

112. Āraṇyaka. 192.8-11 ; ŚP. 68.24, 30-31.

113. Udyoga. 23.19.

114. Ibid. 35.61.

115. ŚP. 14.16.

116. Ibid. 60.17.

117. Ibid. 12.27, 92, 68.16-21.

118. Ibid. 76.5, 140.28.

119. Sabhā. 5.72.

120. Ibid. 5.94.

heavily punished dacoits.¹²¹ It has been said that during the reign of Kekaya king there was not even a single thief in his state, so the people did not suffer.¹²² The story of sage Animāṇḍavya indicates that the police officers were set to capture dacoits, and present them to king to be punished by him.¹²³

The idea of protection of the people's property is so deep rooted that the theorists of the epic advocate the cause of offering compensation to the person from the king's kosha, if he is unsuccessful in finding out the robbers, in order to snatch away the stolen property from them and return to the original owners.¹²⁴ Gautama and Āpastamba also advance the same view and the reason is that the king is the receiver of taxes for the people's protection, and he has to pay compensation, if he is unable to protect them and their possessions.¹²⁵

He has not to protect the people only from the robbers and dacoits, but from other anti-social elements also, such as the Rāshtrapaghātākāḥ.¹²⁶ Kauṭilya also advises him to expell them from the cities and villages to the frontiers of the state.¹²⁷

The king's own persons also harass the people, so, the epic instructs him to restrain them from doing so. The officials harass them more, so, he should always look after their activities.¹²⁸ It has been referred to that Asamañjas, the son of king Sagara of Ayodhyā, killed the children of the citizens by throwing them into the river Sarayū, so, he was expelled by him.¹²⁹ Kīchaka the brother-in-law of king

121. Ādi. 80.4 ; ŚP. Ch. 259.

122. ŚP. Ch. 78.

123. Ādi. 101.2-12.

124. ŚP. 76.9-10.

125. GDS. 10, 7, 46-47 ; ADS. 2.10.26.46.

126. ŚP. 89.13-14.

127. K.A. 2.4.

128. ŚP. Ch. 83.

129. Āraṇyaka. 106.33-38.

Virāṭa harassed the people.¹³⁰ So, it is the king's duty to protect them from his own persons also.

What does he get by protecting the subjects. He is the people's servant, and it is his duty to protect them, as in lieu of his services to them he realises 1/4th or 1/6th of the agricultural product from them.¹³¹ It has been asserted that he gets the same share in sin committed by them. By protecting them he goes to the heaven after his death, otherwise the gate of the hell is always open to him.¹³² The theorists differ on the problem of the share to be obtained by the king in the sin committed by the people and ranges from 1/2, 1/3 and 1/4.¹³³ It has been asserted that the king who protects the subjects does not fall from his position and realises happiness in both the worlds.¹³⁴ It is his duty to protect them from destruction, loss of wealth, murder, suffering and from robbers, and such a king who makes the subjects fearless, realises happiness in this world and after death goes to the heaven.¹³⁵

According to the political thinkers the epic of the king need not follow the rules of the four Āśramas and perform Tapa in forest, he gets hundred times more merit only by protecting the people, what is gained by performing Tapa and observing the Āśrama rules?¹³⁶ Kauṭilya also compares a king to the performer of sacrifice in which Vrata consists in being over active, the sacrifice consists in issuing orders for carrying out the business of the state, and the sacrificial fee

130. Virāṭa. 24.2-3.

131. Infra. Ch. 9.

132. Udyoga. 130.11 ; Kārṇa. 30.63-64 ; Āśvamedhika. 43.18 ; ŚP. 25.12, 89.17 ; Anuśāsana, 24.78, 60.16-17.

133. ŚP. 25.19 ; Anuśāsana, 60.21-23, 141.48.

134. Āśvamedhika. 43.18 ; Āśrama. 12.18-20.

135. ŚP. 98.8-9.

136. Āraṇyaka. 34.70, 192.8-11 ; ŚP. 66.35.

is his impartiality to all.¹³⁷ It is probable that he may have to sacrifice his life while protecting the people, but is it unrewarded? Such a king goes to the heaven by sacrificing his life on the battle field, as Prāṇadāna is considered to be the best type of sacrifice.¹³⁸

The question arises as to what the people have to do, if the king does not protect them? Such a king is worthless like a bull unable to carry on burden, a cow which does not yield milk, a sterile women, an illiterate Brāhmaṇa and a cloud without water, a wooden elephant and a deer made of skin artificially.¹³⁹ The epic recommends that such a worthless king should be killed like a mad and diseased dog mercilessly¹⁴⁰ or must be discarded like a broken boat.¹⁴¹ There are many instances to show that the people killed such kings who did not protect them. Veṇa was such a king who was killed by sages.¹⁴² Against this, there are many evidences to show that kings protected the subjects properly. King Dārva of Magadha, Dushyanta and Śāntanu of the Kuru country and others were the Goptā or protectors of the people.¹⁴³

The king is like a thief who, though realising taxes from the people does not protect and nourish them.¹⁴⁴ He should nourish his subjects like his own children. Like a pregnant woman he should not do what is pleasing to him but what would conduce to good of the people (Lokahitam).¹⁴⁵ Kauṭilya also advances similar view.¹⁴⁶ So, he should be always

137. K.A. 1.18.

138. ŚP.67.16, 73.22-25.

139. Ibid. 79.41-42.

140. Anuśāsana. 60.19-20.

141. Udyoga. 33.67-68 ; ŚP. 57.43-45.

142. ŚP. 59.98-100.

143. Ādi. 105.10, 62.3, 94.3 respectively.

144. ŚP. 137.96, 137.94-95, 139.60 ; Anuśāsana, 128.47 ; ŚP. 23.10, 24.29, 32.2, 57.11, 60.14.20, 347.5.

145. Ibid. 56.44-46.

146. K.A. 1.18.

engaged in the works related to the nourishment of his people.¹⁴⁷ The epic presents many illustrations to show that ancient kings like Yayāti and Śāntanu had pleased the people by nourishing them well.¹⁴⁸

The administrative functions of kings have been divided into three categories namely the civil, judicial and military. These have been discussed elsewhere in this work.¹⁴⁹

The king's duty is to protect and regulate the Varṇa organisation and Āśrama system. It is his duty to engage the people in their respective duties.¹⁵⁰ Kauṭilya, Gautama, Vaśiṣṭha and Manu advance the same opinion.¹⁵¹ The epic presents many illustrations to show that ancient kings followed this injunction, as during the reign of Janaka there was not even a single person who did not follow his Varṇa-Dharma.¹⁵² Prithu Vainya had recognised the Varṇa system and established the social orders.¹⁵³ The Kekaya king boasts that during his reign all persons followed their Varṇa-dharmas.¹⁵⁴ Yudhisṭhira and Parikṣita also had engaged the people in their respective Varṇa Dharmas.¹⁵⁵

But is it essential to follow the Varṇadharmas in every situation? Should relaxations be made during emergency period? Dharma is based on the time and place factors,¹⁵⁶ so during emergency period relaxation must be given. But, during this period also, the persons of higher Varṇas should adopt the profession of their immediate lower

147. ŚP. 118.16.

148. Ādi. 80.4-5, 94.39.

149. Vide this work, chapters 8, 10 and 11 respectively.

150. Āraṇyaka. 198.25 ; Udyoga. 29.25 ; ŚP. 25.31, 77.11, 79.17.

151. K.A. 1.2, 2.1, 3.1 ; GDS. 11.9-10 ; VDS. 19.7 ; Manu. 7.35.

152. Āraṇyaka. 198.27.

153. ŚP. 29.128-129.

154. ŚP. 78.6-17.

155. Ibid. 45.4 ; Ādi. 45.7-9 respectively.

156. Udyoga. 28.2 ; ŚP. 34.20, 79.31.

Vārṇas and after the emergency is over, Prāyaścīta should be performed.¹⁵⁷

He has to regulate the Āśrama rules by persuading the people to follow them as they do so for the fear of Daṇḍa.¹⁵⁸ In case with the upper three Vārṇas, the observance of Āśrama rules is not essential but optional.¹⁵⁹ In case with the Brāhmaṇas it was permissible for them to jump from the Brahmacharya to the Saṁnyāsa provided they had observed celibacy. Śukadeva was an example of this rule.¹⁶⁰ Though, the epic instructs the king to persuade the people to follow their Āśrama rules, but it was merely a scriptural injunction.

The state is an institution organised for the welfare of the people. It is the king's duty to help, support and protect those who are helpless. But who will come in this category? The epic enumerates some types of persons to be supported by the state, such as those who are poor, orphans, persons infirmed by old age, helpless widows, blinds, dumbs, lames and the Saṁnyāsins.¹⁶¹ It has been mentioned that the Kekaya king¹⁶² served and supported the above mentioned types of persons, and king Yayāti also had done so.¹⁶³ King Śāntanu had brought two orphans to his palace and nourished them as his own progeny.¹⁶⁴ Dhṛitarāshṭra, Yudhisṭhira and Parikshita also have been referred to as having supported the helpless persons.¹⁶⁵ Kauṭilya, Vaśiṣṭha and Manu also advise the kings to support and help the persons who are

157. ŚP. 79.1-5.

158. Ibid. 15.11, 40, 63.28.

159. Ibid. 63.23.

160. Ibid. 60.7, 313, 26-27.

161. ŚP. 87.24, 92.34; Āraṇyaka. 284.37-38; Anuśāsaṇa. 128.52, 131.36; Sabbhā. 5.113.

162. ŚP. 78.18.

163. Ādi. 80.3.

164. Ibid. 120.13-18.

165. Udyoga. 30.37-38; Āśrama. 33.8; ŚP. 42.10-12; Ādi. 45.10, 16-17.

helpless or are physically handicapped.¹⁶⁶ There are many epigraphic evidences to show that the ancient kings supported and served such helpless persons. Aśoka had established civil and veterinary hospitals, built alms-houses, rest-houses and had planted shady trees.¹⁶⁷ Samudragupta and Skandagupta also had done much for supporting the helpless ones.¹⁶⁸

The king should beautify the cities by patronising the acrobats, dancers and musicians.¹⁶⁹ King Virāṭa had established Nartanāgāra¹⁷⁰ (Dancing hall). It advises the kings to hold Samāja and celebrate festivals.¹⁷¹ The people of the Matsya country celebrated the Utsava of Brahmā in the month of Āṣāḍha and on those occasions Samāja also was held in which many wrestlers exhibited their skill.¹⁷² During normal times, these recreated the citizens, but on occasions of the outbreak of war, they were expelled from the cities in order to guard against espionage by them.¹⁷³ The Andhaka-Vṛishṇis had done so, when the city of Dvārakā was invaded by Śālva.¹⁷⁴

There are historical evidences of holding Samāja. Aśoka had prohibited its celebration as according to him there were many objectional things in it.¹⁷⁵ The Hāthi Gumphā inscription and Nāsika inscription of Vāśiṣṭhīputra, indicate that Kharavela and Gautamiputra Śātakarṇi held Samāja and celebrated many festivities for the recreation of their people.

166. K.A. 3.20 ; VDS. 19.35-36 ; Manu. 8.394-396.

167. R.E. 2, 8., P.E. 7.

168. Allahabad and Junagarha inscriptions of the respective kings.

See Sircar, D. C., op.cit., pp. 267, 178ff respectively.

169. ŚP. 69.58.

170. Virāṭa. 23.17-18.

171. ŚP. 87.10.

172. Virāṭa. 12.12-17.

173. ŚP. 69.49.

174. Āraṇyaka. 16.12-16, 19.

175. R.E., 1.

The king is the Vittarakṣi¹⁷⁶ (protector of wealth). He creates conditions for economic prosperity of the people. It is a matter of great shame for a king, if in his kingdom, the people have no foodgrains to live on.¹⁷⁷ 'Jīvasamjīvana'¹⁷⁸ (Nourishment of people) is his duty, hence he is 'Prāṇabhṛita'.¹⁷⁹

What has he to do for economic prosperity of the people? He has to adopt an economic policy which encourages both the private and public sectors,¹⁸⁰ and has to undertake such economic undertakings which may give quick good results.¹⁸¹ He should cause the promotion of Vārtā—agriculture, animal husbandry, trade and commerce—as it is the root of the existence of the human society.¹⁸² He has not to neglect economic affairs, as such, a king even reigning over a vast territory perishes away very soon if he does so.¹⁸³ Due to the efficiency of Yudhishtira, the Vārtā developed in the Kuru country.¹⁸⁴

For the development of agriculture, the subjects are to be engaged in the works relating to it, and it is his duty to please them, as Nārada puts a question to Yudhishtira whether they were happy or not, otherwise destruction of the state was inevitable.¹⁸⁵

Agricultural works cannot be developed without providing the agriculturists with adequate means of irrigation, hence Nārada questions Yudhishtira whether he depended only upon the rain, or had done something for irrigating

176. ŚP. 308.143.

177. Udyoga. 39.62.

178. ŚP. 62.9.

179. Āśrama. 5.19.

180. Sabhā. 5.20.

181. Ibid.

182. ŚP. 68.35.

183. Ibid. 93.10.

184. Sabhā. 30.3.

185. Ibid. 5.66.

fields.¹⁸⁶ Kautīlya also refers to steps to be taken by the state for the promotion of irrigational facilities.¹⁸⁷ Many inscriptions belonging to the compositional period of the Mahābhārata indicate that kings took keen interest in this field.¹⁸⁸

The development of agriculture, trade and commerce depends more upon the cattle wealth, so the king has to engage his people in cattle-rearing.¹⁸⁹ It is his duty to protect the cattle wealth, otherwise the Ghoshas will come to an end, and no one will get milk and butter.¹⁹⁰

In the epic there are many illustrations to show that kings had established dairy farms, where the cattle were reared upon. During the regency of Bhīshma, the cattle and even the birds had also become very happy due to the measures adopted by him for their welfare.¹⁹¹ The Kauravas had established Ghoshas in the Dvaita forest, where in, hundreds and thousands of cows marked with Aṅka and Lakṣhaṇa were looked after by Gopālakās.¹⁹² Yudhiṣṭhira also had appointed an officer known as the Gosāmkhya who maintained a record of the cattle.¹⁹³ King Virāṭa had countless of cows and had employed Tantipāla (Sahadeva) as his Gosāmkhyātā, who possessed expert knowledge of the characteristics (Lakṣaṇam), nature (Charitam) as well as the means of their welfare (Maṅgalaṃ).¹⁹⁴ He had appointed a Gavā-dhyaksha, and many Gopālas to look after his cattle wealth.¹⁹⁵

186. Ibid. 5.67.

187. K.A. 2.17.

188. Giranāra Inscription of Rudradāmana, the Hāthīgumphā Inscription of Khāravela and Junagarh Inscription of Skandagupta.

189. ŚP. 89.24.

190. Ibid. 68.23.

191. Ādi. 102.3.

192. Āraṇyaka. 227.23-24, 228.4-6, 229.4-6; Udyoga. 23.25, Virāṭa 3.6.

193. Virāṭa. 9.4, 8-14.

194. Ibid. 3.6-11.

195. Ibid. 33.4-7.

Horses also were reared upon by the state, as these also were very useful from many points of view. King Virāṭa had appointed Granthika (Nakula) as his Aśvādhyaksha and Aśva-bandha, who was expert in training the horses, and also in their medical treatment.¹⁹⁶ The cattle were so useful that the practice of cow-lifting was in prevalance, and the Goharaṇa Parva, a sub-section in the Virāṭa Parva, narrates the story of cow-lifting by the combined forces of the Kauravas and Trigartas.¹⁹⁷

Kauṭilya¹⁹⁸ also refers to the technical terms as mentioned in the epic in connection with the cattle-rearing. The inscriptions of Aśoka¹⁹⁹ also refer to this matter that he had adopted various measures for the welfare of the cattle wealth. Thus, the theory of cattle-rearing was practised by the historical kings who existed during the compositional period of the epic.

The king had to take care for the promotion of industry, and for this, he had to employ artisans in workshops and had to provide them with the raw materials.²⁰⁰ The quantity and quality of products depend upon the nature of workers so according to the epic the king had to employ skilled and trustworthy persons in his workshops.²⁰¹ It refers to the cities in Kuru country which were inhabited by many artisans.²⁰² Mining and preparation of salt also were the industries patronised by the state.

Trade and commerce also contribute to the economic prosperity of state, so the king had treat with the merchants sweetly.²⁰³ It is his duty to engage the people in trade and

196. Ibid. 3.2-3.

197. Ibid. Chapters. 29-62.

198. K.A. 2.29.

199. R.E. 2 ; P.E. 5.7.

200. Sabhā. 5.21, 107.

201. Ibid. 5.22.

202. Ādi. 102.4.

203. ŚP. 88.34-37.

commerce²⁰⁴, and for their promotion merchants must not be heavily taxed.

For the defence of country, and promotion of trade and commerce, the easy means of communications are essential, so the king has to build roads throughout his empire.²⁰⁵ The dacoits loot the merchants on high-ways, so, it is his duty to create suitable conditions for their safe movement²⁰⁶ in his kingdom. The cities were connected with each other with the network of roads, and merchants moved from one place to another through them. The epic refers to a Sārtha—a group of merchants under the leadership of Sārthavāha going from Vidarbha to the Chedi country in connection with trade and commerce.²⁰⁷ Besides road-ways, waterways also were utilised, and tax was realised by the state from the persons who crossed the rivers by boats.²⁰⁸

It is the king's duty to help the subjects with financial assistance during draught, flood and famine, as during such periods, they suffer more. He should offer loans to them on reasonable rates. Kaṭilya²⁰⁹ advises him to take such steps to help them during such conditions. Nārada wants to know from Yudhishthira whether he offered loans to the subjects on concessional rate of 1 percent per month or not?²¹⁰ Whether he assisted them by offering loans in the forms of kind and cash or not?²¹¹ The epic refers to the sufferings caused by draught, floods, disease and conflagration, which did not occur during the reign of Yudhishthira.²¹²

The Vedas are the supreme source of Dharma, so, their preservation is essential. But how these are to be protected

204. Ibid. 89.24.

205 & 206. ŚP. 88.38, 68.21.

207. Āraṇyaka, Chapters. 61-62.

208. ŚP. 69.28.

209. K.A. 2.1., 4.3.

210. Sabhā. 5.68.

211. Ibid. 5.61.

212. Ibid. 30.5.

and preserved? This may be done by punishing those who create difficulties in the way of Vedic studies, or want to destroy the Vedic way of life.²¹³ Besides this, it is essential to support those who dedicate their life for their preservation. The Śrotriya Brāhmaṇas should be supported by him. They should receive tax-free land, their property must not be confiscated even during financial crisis, and physical punishment should not be imposed upon them.²¹⁴ The epic informs that Prithu had promised to follow the injunctions of the Vedas and to protect the Brāhmaṇas.²¹⁵ Yudhishṭhira²¹⁶ had offered Agrahāra to them. The R̥itvika, Purohita, Āchārya, and others were main persons to be respected as they were well versed in Vedic studies, and advised the king to act according to the Vedic injunctions.²¹⁷

The Tāpasas cannot perform penance as they also need protection and support from him.²¹⁸ He has to visit the Āśramas of sages and offer many things to them for their support such as foodgrains, pots, clothes and beds.²¹⁹ Yudhishṭhira, on the occasion of his visit to the Āśramas of sages, offered gold, jars, deer-skins, blankets, sacrificial utensils, dishes, Kamaṇḍalas and iron utensils to them.²²⁰ The idea of protecting and supporting them has been further enhanced by this view that king gets 1/4th of merit gained by them.²²¹ Many inscriptions belonging to the compositional period of the epic reveal that kings offered gold, cloths,

213. ŚP. 90.7-8.

214. Ibid. 56.12-13.

215. Ibid. 59.112-120.

216. Āśrama. 33.4.5.

217. ŚP. 92.39.

218. Ādi. 37.23.24.

219. ŚP. 87.25-31.

220. Āśrama. 34.12-15.

221. ŚP. 128.20; Ādi. 37.20-24.

shelters, medicines and foodgrains to Tāpasas irrespective of their sects.²²²

According to the Vedic way of life, performance of Yajña and offering of Dāna are essential parts of life. The deeds of the Kshatriya are very ferocious which result in violence, but the performance of Yajña and offering of Dāna purify him.²²³ The Rājasūya and Āsvamedha raise political status, and help the performer to get the heaven.

The idea of offering Dāna is closely related to the idea of performing sacrifices, as on such occasions, kings offered abundance of Dakṣiṇā to the Brāhmaṇas.²²⁴ The Dāna-dharma Parva, a sub-section in the Anuśāsana Parva deals with different aspects of Dāna.

The performance of sacrifices and offering of Dāna are good, but are these to be done even at the cost of Kosha? The story of king Suvarchas reveals that the kings fall in dangers who exhaust their Kosha for the performance of sacrifices as their neighbours finding them weak invade, and occupy their Kingdoms.²²⁵ The epic refers to ancient kings who had performed sacrifices and offered abundance of Dakṣiṇā to the worthy ones. King Yayāti had spotted the earth with Chaityas and Yūpas by performing sacrifices.²²⁶ Kings Yuvanāśva, Bharata, Prithu, Yudhishtira and Parīkshita also had performed sacrifices.²²⁷ There are many epigraphic and numismatic evidences to show that kings who reigned during the compositional period of the epic, performed sacrifices and offered Dāna.

Protection of temples and visits to the Tirthas also forms part of the king's duties. He has not to occupy Devasva or

222. Inscriptions of Aśoka, Hāthīgumphā Inscriptions of Khāravela and the Śaka-Sātavahana Inscriptions at Nāsika.

223. Anuśāsana. 60.4 ; ŚP. 98.3-5.

224. Ibid. 61.24 ; ŚP. 87.23.92.33.

225. Āsvamedhika. 4.9-13.

226. Ādi. 1.169.

227. Āraṇyaka. 126.5-6, 129.15, 183.1-11 ; Sabhā Ch. 38-32.

the temple's property even during financial crisis.²²⁸ The Tirthayātrā Parva, a sub-section in the Āraṇyaka Parva, refers to the locations of Tirthas.

The Āśramas of sages played an important role in the spread of education in ancient India. The Kaurava-Pāṇḍava princes had gone to the Āśrama of Droṇa for getting military education from him. It was king's duty to support and protect those who had established these educational institutions. The epic regards it as a deplorable thing for the king, if in his state a learned Brāhmaṇa starves, so, it instructs him to support such persons. It has been mentioned that Yudhisṭhira had offered thousands of Nishkas to the Snātakas and had fed them.²²⁹

The Yajñas also played important role in the spread of knowledge as on the occasions of their performance the learned Brāhmaṇas were invited. In the Yajñamaṇḍapa of king Janaka, only the experienced and learned Brāhmaṇas were allowed to take part in learned discussions.²³⁰ On such occasions, matters of religion and philosophy were discussed or ancient stories were told to the persons assembled on that occasion.

For the promotion of learning, the king should patronise specialists in different branches of learning by offering the means of livelihood to them.²³¹ He should respect the Āchāryas and learned ones²³² and should patronise great archers, architects, astronomers, and physicians.²³³ The epic mentions that during the reign of the Kekaya king there was not even a single Brāhmaṇa who had not acquired knowledge.²³⁴

228. ŚP. 134.2.

229. Virāṭa. 65.16 ; 45.5-6.

230. Āraṇyaka. 133-134 chapters.

231. Āśrama. 10.14-16.

232. ŚP. 25.16.

233. Ibid. 87.16.

234. Ibid. 45.5-6, 78.9 respectively.

The epic presents many illustrations of good administration by ancient kings. During the ideal reign of the Kekaya king all the Varṇas were engaged in the performance of their respective duties.²³⁵ During the reign of Prithu²³⁶ the people did not suffer in any way as they were well protected. King Yayāti had pleased his subjects by suppressing dacoits.²³⁷ During the ideal rule of Dushyanta,²³⁸ the people followed the Varṇa-Dharma, agriculture was developed, and all were happy. The epic narrates the ideal rule of Yudhiṣṭhira²³⁹ which was glorious in every way. During the reign of king Parikṣita,²⁴⁰ the people witnessed the rule of a righteous king, the four varṇas were engaged in their duties, and all the subjects were equally looked after.

The foregoing references show that the king had to do many things for the welfare of the people, but the question arises whether he was bound to do all these deeds during all situations? Should he follow the same administrative policy during the normal and abnormal times alike? According to the theorists of the epic, the duty of king differs during the abnormal times from normal times.²⁴¹ The abnormal condition (Āpad) is created by external aggressions or is caused by natural calamities. During such time, the Kosha is exhausted, army is weakened, the wellwishers, friends and ministers also desert the king, he is attacked by mighty powers, and has no hope of survival.²⁴²

During such time, Dharma is fixed according to the time

235. ŚP. Ch. 78.

236. Ibid. 59.124-125.

237. Ādi. 80.1-5.

238. Ibid. 62.3-12.

239. Ibid. 214.2-12; Sabhā 30.1-8.

240. Ibid. 45.6-10.

241. ŚP. 128.13-14.

242. Ibid. 128.1-4; 129.1-3.

and place factors, Adharma becomes the Dharma and vice versa, so all methods should be adopted for overcoming the dangers.²⁴³ In order to justify this, the epic presents a very appropriate simile that as a prisoner tries to run away from the Jail by adopting any means, so, a suffering king should adopt every method to come out of the dangers.²⁴⁴

There are three doors open to a king during Āpad. In order to remove it, he should accumulate wealth, as a overflowing Kosha can protect him.²⁴⁵ The next course of action to be adopted is to establish alliance with the invader if he is superior.²⁴⁶ If it is impossible, and there is no room for his protection, then he should abandon his capital city, Kosha and the army, and should protect his life, as being protected, he may regain his lost things.²⁴⁷ This is proved by the story of king Samvarana, who being hard pressed by the Pañchālas abandoned his state, and later regained it with the assistance of Vaśishṭha.²⁴⁸

Notions of kingship

Regarding king's divinity, the principle is to be accepted that kingship is a divinely ordained institution, the hereditary rights of the king cannot be challenged and forfeited through any act, the kings are accountable only to the God, and resistance to them is a sin.²⁴⁹ A perusal of the epic shows that this type of king's divinity was unknown to ancient Indians, and their concept of this matter is different from what it has been mentioned above.

243. Ibid. 128.15-19.

244. Ibid. 128.22.

245. Infra. ch. 8. pp. 224-26.

246. ŚP. 129.4-5.

247. Ibid. 129.6-8.

248. Ādi. 89.31-42.

249. Figgis, J. N. DRK, pp. 5-6.

Though, the idea of king's divinity is found in the Vedic literature²⁵⁰ but it was developed after the beginning of the Christian era with the advent of the Kushāṇas who regarded themselves as the "Devaputra", and this idea was borrowed by them from the Chinese kings who regarded themselves as the sons of the Heaven.²⁵¹ The Mahābhārata contains information regarding the idea of king's divinity. It informs that Virajas, the first person to be appointed as king, was the Mānasa-Putra of Viṣṇu.²⁵² King is a divine being, who comes to the earth after the exhaustion of his merit in the heaven,²⁵³ so, he should not be disobeyed, the whole world is under his control, but he is not under the control of any one.²⁵⁴ These things clearly indicate that the epic refers to the period of absolute monarchy, when the king's authority was declared above people's control. It does not differentiate a God (Deva) from king (Naradeva), and regards the latter as equal in status with the former. Further it declares that the whole world is under his control due to his divinity.²⁵⁵ The theorists of the epic question as to why the king is regarded as the divine (Daivata), and why he is respected more than others, though he is also like other human beings? As an answer, the epic asserts that he is regarded so, as his existence ensures the world's existence, and peace and order in society, so, he should not be treated like an ordinary human being, as he is the great God in human form.²⁵⁶ This very idea has been advanced by Manu also.²⁵⁷

250. R.V. 10.90.12, 4.42.8-9; AV. 20.127.7; Śat. Br. 5.1.5.14, 12.4.4.3; Tai. Br. 18.10.10.

251. Altekar, A. S. SGAI. p. 90; Sharma, R. S. Central Asia and Early Medieval Indian Polity, QRHS, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 180.

252. ŚP. 59.94.

253. Ibid. 59.134-136.

254. Ibid. 59.135-137.

255. Ibid. 59.132-133, 140.

256. Ibid. 68.1, 37, 40.

257. Manu. 7.8.

The epic has referred to many kings to whom divinity has been attributed. Prithu has been regarded as Vidhātā, Prajāpati and Indra,²⁵⁸ and Sudeva the king of Kāśī has been referred to as god (Devasaṁkāśah).²⁵⁹ Kings Uparichar and Yayāti have been regarded as "Deva" and "Indra" respectively.²⁶⁰ Yadu and Turvasu, two sons of Yayāti have been referred to as Indra and Vishṇu respectively.²⁶¹ So many descendents of Bharata were known as Gods (Devakalpah).²⁶² The Five Pāṇḍavas have been regarded as the sons of gods (Devaputrāḥ), and on that account those were considered as unkillable.²⁶³

Is the king's person divine or his office? Is it necessary to regard him as divine in all conditions? According to the thinkers of the epic, his office is divine, not his person, and the office also on the ground that his functions are like the functions to be discharged by gods. Thus, the epic shows only functional resemblance. He is Śakra, Sukra, Brahmā and Brihaspati, Bhava and Babhru because he protects the people, is very wise, creates many things and does many acts for people's welfare, is expert in eloquence, is the symbol of good, and nourishes the subjects. He is like the sun god because he removes darkness caused by Adharma.²⁶⁴ He takes the forms of five gods namely Āditya, Agni, Mrityu, Vaiśravaṇa, and of Yama on account of his acts like these gods, as he sees every thing through his spies like the sun through his rays, destroys the foes like the fire, like Yama he controls the wicked ones inflicting punishment upon them, like Mrityu, he extermi-

258. Āraṇyaka. 183. 13, 19.

259. Anuśāsana, 31.13.

260. Ādi. 57.14, 80.5, 81.7.

261. Ibid. 78.9.

262. Ibid. 69.50-51.

263. Ibid. 107.2 ; Sabhā. 71.34 ; Āraṇyaka. 159.15-16.

264. Āraṇyaka. 183.22-26.

nates the foes, and like Kubera he is very charitable.²⁶⁵ Manu also advances the idea of the functional resemblance.²⁶⁶

But, does it mean that his divinity affords him any immunity when the question of his duties and responsibilities was at issue? Only a good and righteous king is to be regarded as god who loves his subjects, and shows compassion to them. He is the embodiment of sufferings, if he causes sufferings to the people, and must be punished. He had no hereditary right to rule, and was to be killed in case he failed to discharge his duties. He was not accountable to God for his acts but to the people, as he was their servant who realised taxes from them as his salary. The wicked king Veṇa claimed exemptions from punishment on the ground of his divinity, but was killed by sages due to his bad acts.²⁶⁷

Thus the western concept of king's divinity cannot be applied to the Indian kings, and the epic particularity is very clear on this point that only a good king is to be regarded as God, otherwise he is Kali, thief and Asura, worth to be killed like a mad and diseased dog.²⁶⁸

The essence of rulership lies in the preservation and maintenance of moral order which is symbolised Dharma. He is not the formulator of Dharma but by its regulator. King Prithu had promised to act according to Dharma and not according to his own will.²⁶⁹ But, how he may uphold the moral order? He can do so by imparting true justice to all, acting within the frame-work of the Śāstra, and punishing the law-breakers.²⁷⁰

The thinkers of the epic assert that the people follow the great ones, and the subjects follow the king, so they instruct him to mould his character. A king

265. ŚP. 68.41-47.

266. Manu. 9.30.3.311.

267. ŚP. 59.98-100.

268. Anuśāsana, 60.19-20.

269. ŚP. 59, 112-120.

270. Infra. chapter, 10.

failing in the performance of his own duty and following a bad path, can never persuade his servants and subjects to follow the good path. The people realise happiness if he is lawful otherwise they suffer.

The epic advances a very important notion of kingship that king is the factor for creating the particular condition of time. The point has been discussed elsewhere in this work.²⁷¹

The ancient Indian thinkers have advanced the view that king is the servant of people, because he realises taxes from them as his salary in lieu of his services which he renders to them.²⁷² The epic also refers to the same view. He cannot utilise the Kosha only for his personal pleasures, and if he does so he is regarded as a thief.²⁷³ So, it is his duty to serve the people well as a true servant.

State is a trust and king is a trustee. The story of sage Gālava and king Uśīnara indicates the same thing, as the latter could not give even the price of 200 horses to the former from his Kosha because he regarded it as the people's property.²⁷⁴ In a true sense, he is not a trustee but more than that. The trustee is not required to sacrifice his self interest for the people's welfare, but like a pregnant woman for the welfare of her child to be born, the king is required to do so.

The king should nourish and protect his subjects like his own sons,²⁷⁵ showing equal attention to all.²⁷⁶ The people move in the territory of their king, like the sons in the courtyard of their father's house, provided he protects them well, so, a king should love and serve his subjects like his own sons and grandsons.²⁷⁷ But, how it is possible for him to make them realise so? For this, he should create

271. Supra. ch. 2. pp. 64-65.

272. Infra. ch. 9. pp. 240-41.

273. Ibid.

274. Udyoga. 116.6-14.

275. Anuśāsana. 60.17-18.

276. ŚP. 25.13.

277. Ibid. 64.28, 69.26.

conditions so that they may regard him as their parents.²⁷⁸ The idea of helping and assisting the helpless ones came from this view that being the parents of people, he should help those who are helpless, hence according to the thinkers of the ep̥c he should protect and nourish them like father (Piteva).²⁷⁹ Kauṭilya and Manu also advance the same view.²⁸⁰

The ep̥c presents many examples of this notion. King Avikṣhita²⁸¹ was like father to his subjects, Vyusītāśva²⁸² the Paurava king nourished his subjects like his own legitimate sons, Śāntanu²⁸³, Vichitravīrya and Pāṇḍu served the subjects as their own sons,²⁸⁴ and Yudhisṭhira also did so.²⁸⁵ There are some historical illustrations to show that this idea of the parental relationship was actually practised by some kings as Aśoka regarded his subjects as his own sons.²⁸⁶

King has no freedom. Though he is the lord of an extensive territory, yet he is not free to realise happiness and enjoy the state fully and freely.²⁸⁷ He has no freedom in eating and sleeping, he is always under the control of others and has no freedom in the matters of war and peace.²⁸⁸ He has no freedom in realising Kāma, and even in the council of ministers he has no freedom, as he has to bow down to their views.²⁸⁹ He orders others to obey his commands, but he is himself often forced to act against his own will, as on the

278. Sabbā. 5.46.

279. Ibid. 5.113.

280. K.A. 2.1, 4.3; Manu. 7.80.

281. Āśvamedhika. 5.11.

282. Ādi. 112.7, 13-14.

283. Ibid. 94.16.

284. Ibid. 133.10.

285. Virāṭa. 65.17.

286. Kalinga rock edict. 2.

287. ŚP. 308.136.

288. Ibid. 308.137-138.

289. Ibid. 308.139.

request by the people for their service, he cannot even sleep and has to get up immediately.²⁹⁰ The historical illustration of Aśoka is there to prove the observance of this rule during the compositional period of the epic as he was always ready to serve the people.²⁹¹ He is not free to offer his Kosha to others or spend according to his own will. King Uśinara²⁹² and Trasadasyu²⁹³ could not offer wealth from their Kosha to sages Gālava and Agastya respectively.

Check on King's autocracy

The King is very powerful but does it mean that he is free to act according to his own will or are there checks to restrain him from following the bad path? The epic refers to some checks to be imposed on the king in order to restrain him from being an autocrat.

In order to make the king efficient and good, he should be trained in an efficient manner in different branches of learning under the supervision of competent teachers.²⁹⁴ The proper training imparted to them results in good, and they become modest, self-controlled, religious, sweet in speech, eager to respect the elders, sensitive to public opinion and criticism. A prince trained on above lines cannot be a source of trouble to his subjects.²⁹⁵

On the occasion of King's coronation he had to take an oath to protect and nourish the people according to the injunctions of the Veda-Śāstras. King Prithu had taken an oath to do so.²⁹⁶ King Yudhishtira²⁹⁷ has been referred to

290. Ibid. 308.140-142.

291. R.E. 6.

292. Udyoga. 116.1-14.

293. Āraṇyaka. Ch. 96.

294. Vide this chapter, pp. 120-123.

295. For details see this work Ch. 5.

296. ŚP. 59.112-116.

297. Āraṇyaka. 5.5; V irāṭa. 65.8.

as a "Satyasandha" and "Dridhavrata" king who followed the truth and acted according to the oath which he had taken on the occasion of his coronation ceremony. The king who does not protect the people even after taking an oath is regarded as a false-king.²⁹⁸ So, the coronation oath also reminded them to be true to the vow.

Association with the wise ones also is a means to correct him. By Giving good advice to him, they restrain him from following the wrong path.²⁹⁹ The king who does not follow the advice given by the wise and experienced ones, perishes away very soon. Bhīṣma³⁰⁰ and others had advised Duryodhan to follow the right path, but all in vein, hence, destruction of the Kṣatriyas was inevitable.

Religious and spiritual sanctions exercise the greatest terror in the minds of kings, and were used to restrain them from autocracy. The epic declares many times that the king goes to the heaven if he nourishes the people well, otherwise, the gate to the hell is open to him.³⁰¹ How the kings were made conversant with this notion? The Śāstras contain such things, hence, their study will reveal to them the consequences to be faced, caused by their misdeeds. So, they should study the Śāstras and act according to their injunctions³⁰² as Prithu Vainya had promised to do so.³⁰³ Kings were dethroned or killed who acted against the injunctions of the law such as Vena and Nahusha who were killed and dethroned respectively,³⁰⁴ but king Parikshita ruled the earth according to the Śāstrika law.³⁰⁵

298. ŚP. 76.9.

299. Aranyaka. 149.37, 339.3; Sabhā. 5.105; ŚP. 123.21-25, 130.21.

300. Udyoga. 125.1-18.

301. Vide this chapter pp. 139-40.

302. ŚP. 25.13, 120.7, 20.

303. Ibid. 59.112.

304. Ibid. 59.98-100; Udyoga. 115.20-21.

305. Ādi. 37.24.

The ministers were a check on king's autocracy. It has been asserted that a wise king should follow the advice given by his ministers, and generally he did so, but in all the cases, it was not possible. There are many instances to show that ministers could not resist kings from following the bad path.³⁰⁶

The local bodies tried to control the wicked kings, and exercised curbs on their autocracy. In the village-Pañchāyats, the voice of the villagers prevailed, and the king could not impose taxes without consulting the village-councils. In judicial administration also, he had to follow the injunctions of the Law-books. The Śrenis and Jātīdharmanas played an important role, and removed a powerful engine of oppression from the king's control. The local bodies got percentage in taxes to be realised by state, and could utilise them on works of public utility. The extensive decentralisation brought about in ancient India, was thus, the most effective and practical check upon the king's autocracy.

The public opinion also was an effective means to control the king. The wise ones dispatched their spies among the people to know their reactions regarding their own conducts.³⁰⁷ Kautilya has recognised the force of public opinion in politics as he says that the king must be made to realise that his prosperity rests on the good will of the people.³⁰⁸ Furthermore he refers to the fact that the wrath of the people had led to the killing of some monarchs.³⁰⁹ The public opinion takes many forms.

The residents of capital city were in a position to know the activities of kings, and advised them to discard the bad path. This is illustrated by the instance that the citizens advised Nalā not to play dice as it was disastrous to him, but he did not give his attention to their advice, hence they

306. *Infra*. Ch. 7, pp. 203-204.

307. ŚP. 90.15.

308. K.A. 1.18.

309. *Ibid*. 1.5.

returned with the remarks that the king's destruction is inevitable.³¹⁰

Demonstration before king was an effective means of expressing the public opinion. The people had opposed the decision by king Yayāti to coronate his youngest son Puru discarding the claim of the eldest son Yadu, but, after explaining the justification of his decision, he had pacified them.³¹¹ Devāpī could not be coronated as king, for in the public opinion, he was unfit because he was Hīnāṅga³¹² —physically handicapped.

Migration of the people resulted in immense economic losses to the Kosha, which in the view of the theorists is the root of the state's existence.³¹³ Thus, the king was brought to his senses. The epic, on account of this reason, instructs the king not to impose high-rated taxes upon cultivators, artisans and merchants or to give sufferings to them in any form. It has been asserted that as birds, for fear of Śyena, fly from one tree to another, likewise, the people harassed by the wicked kings leave their territory and go to the territory of other kings. The residents of Hastināpur preferred to migrate than to reside in the Kuru country ruled by the wicked king Duryodhana.³¹⁵

If all these measures were in effective then what was to be done? The wicked kings should be dethroned by the people, and a new king should be appointed for their protection.³¹⁶ There are many instances of this in the epic such as king Nahusha³¹⁷ was dethroned from his kingship because he

310. *Āraṇyaka*. 56.11-18.

311. *Ādi*. 80.12-25.

312. *Udyoga*. 147.21-26.

313. *ŚP*. 128. 35.

314. *Ibid*. 86.13.

315. *Āraṇyaka*. 1. 10-15.

316. *Udyoga*. 38.36.

317. *Ibid*. 15.20-21; *ŚP*. 342.46-51; *Anuśāsana* 102.5-29; 102.-11-24.

was a wicked king. Khaninetra, the great grandson of Ikshvāku was dethroned by the people as he could not protect them, and the subjects annoited his son Suvarchas as their king who taking a lesson from his father's fate, protected them efficiently.³¹⁸ King Janamejaya³¹⁹ was dethroned, as he had killed a Brāhmaṇa. The epic considers a wicked king as a broken boat to be discarded because under the rule of such a king no one may be safe and realise happiness.³²⁰

What is the last step to be taken for protection from the unrighteous rule of a wicked king? The discourse between Kāmandaka and Āṅgīrashtha shows that a king is to be killed if being pervaded by Kāma and Moha discards the Dharma, and causes suffering to people.³²¹ Such a king is "Rājakali"-king as the embodiment of sufferings who even realising taxes does not protect the people, and such a wicked king must be killed like a mad dog.³²² The epic presents many examples of the murder of kings such as king Veṇa was killed by sages.³²³ Kṛishṇa had killed Kāṁsa as he had no control on his senses³²⁴, and Śāla an Ikshvāku king was killed by Vāmadeva as he had forcibly retained his two horses.³²⁵ Kautīlya³²⁶ presents the names of such kings who were killed by people due to their misconduct.

Do these measures and instances prove the existence of a constitutional or limited monarchy? A scholar has tried to show that in the Kuru country there existed a type of limited monarchy.³²⁷ But it is very difficult to agree with him because

318. Āśvamedhika. 4.3-11.

319. ŚP. 146.3-5, 148.34-35.

320. ŚP. 57.43-45, 137.89-90.

321. Ibid. 123.14-17., 124. 11-14.

322. Anuśāsana, 60.18-19.

323. ŚP. 59.98-100.

324. Udyoga, 126.36-37.

325. Āraṇyaka. Ch. 190.

326. K.A. 1.5.

327. Bandopadhyaya, N. C., DHPPT. Pt. 1st, Pp. 156-161.

there was no Parliament to control the king, and the people's voice also in many cases was ineffective. Yayāti and Duryodhana acted according to their wills, and Pratipa bowed down to the public opinion because he was doing wrong. The matters of the Kuru polity were decided by king, and the public opinion was totally ineffective when Duryodhana expelled the Pāṇḍavas or decided to fight the Bhārata battle. The historicity of the up-risings, dethronement and the murder of kings may be accepted but these do not prove that monarchy was limited, because spordic intervention or uprising is a totally different phenomenon from a continuous exercise of the political power by the people or their accredited representative.³²⁸

Generally, a cordial relationship existed between the kings on one hand, and the people on the other. The former had to do everything possible for the welfare of the latter ones. The king should attract the people's mind towards him, as such a king does not fall, who has the backing of the people.³²⁹ But, how the Lokachitta (people's mind) may be attracted? This may be done by speaking sweet words and controlling senses. Further-more, he should respect the rich ones as they are the limbs of the state, and should be encouraged to show compassion to the people.³³⁰ The exact nature of king's relationship with the subjects is apparent from the speech which he delivered on the occasion of the invasions by the foes.³³¹ A wise king has been advised to test the loyalty of people by adopting secret means.³³² He should do the works of 'Lokārādhana' by performing many deeds for the people's welfare.³³³

328. Varma, V. P. HPTMF. Pp. 24-25.

329. ŚP. 57.28.

330. Ibid. 89.25-26.

331. Ibid. 88.25-29.

332. Sabhā. 5.83.

333. ŚP. 138.55.

There are many instances to show that kings sacrificed their interests for the welfare of people, and respected the public sentiment by granting their demands. King Sagara had expelled his son Asamañjas from his state as he had killed the children of his subjects.³³⁴ There cannot be a better example of king's relationship with the people than this, that they have been advised to sacrifice their self-interest for the happiness of the people as a pregnant woman sacrifices her self-interest for the welfare of the child to be born.³³⁵

What the subjects had to do to cherish good relations with kings? King is the cause for the people's prosperity, so it has been considered that they should not have enmity with him.³³⁶ A king being insulted by his own people, cannot prosper, and others also do not respect him.³³⁷ The epic asserts that the loyal subjects realise happiness in both the worlds, but the case is otherwise, when they are not loyal to him.³³⁸ He is the parents of the people so he must be respected.

There are many illustrations to show that the people were very loyal to the king. The subjects of Yudhishtira were loyal to him, and had affection for him.³³⁹ The subjects of the defeated and exiled king Dyumtsena were so loyal to him that they requested him to return and rule over the kingdom after the murder of his foe by his own minister.³⁴⁰ But does the people's loyalty mean blind following? Only a good king is to be respected, otherwise he is to be punished. The people could criticise the bad acts of the king.³⁴¹

334. Āraṇyaka. 106.33-38.

335. ŚP. 56.45-46.

336. Ibid. 65.28-29.

337. Ibid. 67.33-37.

338. Ibid. 68.38-50.

339. Āraṇyaka. 1.20, 35.

340. Ibid. 278. 7-9., 283. 3-11.

341. Ibid. 1-12.

Chapter VI

REPUBLICS

The Mahābhārata contains two terms namely Gaṇa and Saṁgha¹ in order to denote the republics. Different scholars have interpreted them differently. Fleet and M. Williams think that Gaṇa stands for a tribe, but this meaning does not convey the sense of the political character of this term. Buhler has translated it as a corporation of traders and workmen, but in the political sense these meanings are not appropriate. Jolly takes it as an assembly, but the Gaṇa is not only an assembly. Jayaswal has refuted all these views of the western scholars and on the basis of literary and archaeological evidences has interpreted Gaṇa as a republican state, because it means the numbers. Gaṇarājya, therefore, will mean the rule of numbers or the rule by many.² The term Saṁgha also denotes a republican state, it is not a single state, but a confederation of many republics. It is applied to the multitude of human beings, and conveys the meaning of a corporate body based on the sense of equality. It means political confederation also.³ Kātyāyana takes the term Saṁgha as a form of Government distinct from the 'Ekarāja' where sovereignty is vested in one, and not in many, as in the former.⁴

Though Gaṇa and Saṁgha stand for the individual and confederate republican types of states respectively, but some time, they have been used as synonymous with each other. Pāṇini refers to the Yaudheya Saṁgha, where as they refer

1. ŚP. Chapters 82 and 108.

2. For the views of western scholars and their criticism see Jayaswal, K. P., H P., Pp. 22-23.

3. Pāṇini, Aṣṭādhyāyī, 3.3.86.

4. Vārtika, 4.1. 168.1.

to themselves as Gaṇa on their coins. The epic also is not very particular in this matter, and uses these terms to denote the republican state in general.⁵

Names of republican states :

The Mahābhārata refers to the republican states whose historicity may be proved by other literary and archaeological evidences. A perusal of these republics shows that most of them existed in western⁶ India, and only a few in eastern India.

The republics of the north-western mountainous regions are referred to as the "Saṃghāḥ Saṃghchārīṇaḥ" and the people in those Saṃghas are referred to as the "Girigahvara-vāsinaḥ".⁷ The epic does not refer to the specific names of the Saṃghāḥ in that region, so one has to depend on other sources to know their particular names. Kātyāyana refers to some of these republics such as the Hṛidagolīyas of Hṛidagola and the Andhakavārtīyāḥ who perhaps resided in the present Hadda and Andhakuī regions of Afghanistan.⁸ The republic of the Rohitakagīriyas of the Rohitaka mountain as referred to by him was established perhaps in the present Hindukuśa mountainous region which is known as the Lohitagiri in the epic where Arjuna had defeated a confederation of ten tribes.⁹

The epic mentions the Pārvatīyāḥ who were experts in fighting by hurling stone-blocks and by shooting stone balls with strings.¹⁰ A perusal of other works shows that these people also had organised a republican state, and resided in

5. ŚP. Chapter: 82 and 108.

6. For details see Pandey, S. L. Janatantravāda, pp. 233-240.

7. Droṇa, 68.45.

8. Agrawala, V.S. IKP, p. 434.

9. Sabhā. 24. 16-17.

10. Droṇa. 97.29-33.

the mountainous regions of north western India. Pāṇini refers to the Yaudhyādi group¹¹ of the Saṁghas, and later writers while setting examples enumerate the Jyāvāṇeya people as a republican state, who were a people of the warrior class, whose bow-strings served as arrows. These Jyāvāṇeyas, the republican people, may be rightly identified with the “Pārvatīyān Pāṣāṇayodhinaḥ” who were experts in *Aśma-yuddha* in hurling stone balls with the *Kṣhepaṇīyaiḥ* which corresponds to the Jyāvāṇa.

The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa refers to the ‘Parvatāśrayiṇaḥ’ of the west, such as the Nihāras, perhaps residing near present Nagarahāra, and the Haṁsamārgas¹² who perhaps resided in the present territory of Hunza, now in Pak-occupied western Kashmir. It is interesting to note that the Haṁsamārgas¹³ as a people are mentioned in the epic.

All these references show that the Parvata Āyudha-jivin-Saṁghas¹⁴ as referred to by Pāṇini may be identified with the “Saṁghāḥ Saṁghachārīṇaḥ” and “Girigahvarvāsinah” of the epic who again have been referred to as the “Pratichyāḥ Pārvatīyāḥ”.¹⁵ These “Pārvatān” and the “Parvatvāsinah” were defeated by Arjuna, and have been referred to as the Dasyus.¹⁶ At present also, these people are governed by their Jirgas and are war like people living mostly with the help of their arms.

The Mahābhārata refers to many republics which existed mostly in the former provinces of the Punjab, Sindh, and Rajasthan, and a few in the present M.P., Delhi and Western U.P. regions. In the time of Pāṇini and Alexander, these republics were very prosperous and famous for their love of independence. The Greek and Latin sources, along with

11. Ashṭādhyāyī, 4.1.178 ; 5.3.117.

12. Agrawala, V. S., op.cit. p. 434-435.

13. Bhīṣma. 10.68.

14. Pāṇini, op.cit. 434.

15. Udyoga. 30.24.

16. Sabhā. 24.2 and 15.

many inscriptions, seals and coins are helpful in the identification of their names and localities.

The Trigartas were a republican people and have been referred to as being defeated by Nakula and Arjuna in the western direction.¹⁷ They had brought presents to be offered to Yudhishthira on the occasion of the performance of Rājāsūya by him.¹⁸ They were invited by the Kauravas to fight on their side,¹⁹ and the Trigarta king Suśarmā, with his brothers, is referred to as doing so.²⁰

The term Trigarta stands for three valleys viz. those of the rivers Rāvi, Vyāsa and Sutlaj. This region was their homeland. From other sources it is known that the Trigarta republic was a league of six different tribes but the epic does not refer to their names. The Kāśikā enumerates their names such as the Kaundopartha, Dāṇḍikī, Krausatakī, Jālamānī, Brahmagupta and Jānakī,²¹ these tribes, however have not been identified. The coins of the Trigarta²² republic are found, and on palæographic basis, have been placed in the 2nd century B.C. Their subsequent coins are not known to us.

The Mālava-Kṣudrakas have been referred to as a republican people, and have been regarded as the sons of Mālavi, the mother of Sāvitrī.²³ The epic refers to them as being defeated by Kṛiṣṇa²⁴ and Nakula,²⁵ and they had come to offer presents to Yudhishthira.²⁶ They fought on the Kaurava side in the Bhārata battle.²⁷

17. Ibid. 29.1-2, 6 ; Āśvamedhika. Ch. 73. respectively.

18. Sabhā. 48.13.

19. Udyoga. 30.23.

20. Droṇa. Chapters 16-17.

21. Quoted by Agrawala, V. S. Op.cit. p. 445.

22. Allan, J. CCAI. p. cxl.

23. Āraṇyaka. 281.58.

24. Droṇa. 10.17.

25. Sabhā. 29.6.

26. Ibid. 48.14.

27. Droṇa. 16.19.

They had vigorously resisted Alexander's invasion during the last quarter of the 4th century B.C. but being pressed by him, migrated to Rajasthan and Mālavā from their original homeland in the Punjab. Their coins are found in Jaipur region of Rajasthan and belong to the period from the 2nd to the early 4th century A.D.²⁸ As a republican people, they existed up to the 4th century A.D. as they have been referred to as a Gaṇa state in the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta.²⁹

The Kshudrakas were a republican people who resided in the valley of the rivers Jhelam and Chenab, and have been mentioned along with the Mālavas. The expression Kshudraka-Mālava in the epic³⁰ shows the close relationship which existed between the two. They had come to offer presents to Yudhishṭhira.³¹ During the 4th century B.C., they had come in clash with Alexander, and had organised a confederation with the Mālavas against him.

The Yaudheyas had organised a republican type of state and have been referred to by Pāṇini,³² but the Greek writers do not mention them. Nakula had defeated them during his campaign in the western direction.³³ Their territory was rich in cattle and corn, hence they were very prosperous. Nakula had reached their headquarters at Rohitaka which was the favourite place of Kārttikeya. There, he fought the valiant heroes who were like the Mattamayūrah (Inebriated peacocks).

The references to Rohitika, the God Kārttikeya and Mayūra apparently suggest that they were associated with the Yaudheyas. This apparent from their coins³⁴ also which are found in the eastern Punjab and in the valley

28. Allan, J. CCAI, p. cvi.

29. Sircar, D. C. SI. p. 265.

30. Sabhā. 48.13.

31. Ibid.

32. Pāṇini, Op.cit. 5.3.117.

33. Sabhā. 29.4-5.

34. Allan, J. Op.cit. Pp. cxlvii-clix.

of the rivers Sutlaj and Yamunā covering a period of about four centuries (2nd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D.). At Rohitaka, their mint-house has been found. It seems that being pressed by the foreign invasions they migrated to Bharatapur region in the 1st century B.C. They came in clash with Rudardāman who had defeated them.³⁵ Their Vijayagarh stone inscription refers to the election of their leader, and their seal bears the legend denoting the members of their cabinet.³⁶ Their existence up to the 4th century A.D. is proved by the Allahabad Inscription of Samudra gupta.³⁷

The Madras had their capital at Śākala which was situated on the banks of the river Āpagā. Mādri the wife of Pāṇḍu was a Madra-princess.³⁸ They have been referred to as being defeated by Nakula in the western direction. They had come to offer presents to Yudhishthira although they fought on the Kaurava side.³⁹ Pāṇini and Kauṭilya both have referred to them as a republican people.⁴⁰ They continued their republican character at least up to the 4th century A.D. as is proved by the Allahabad Inscription of Samudra-Gupta.⁴¹

The Audumbaras have been referred to as being defeated by Karṇa.⁴² They had come to offer presents to Yudhishthira.⁴³ Their coins⁴⁴ are found in the Kāngarā valley, Ambala and Hoshiyarpur districts of the Punjab, which are inscribed both in Brāhmi and Kharoshthi, and belong to the period from the 1st century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. The legends on their coins indicate that those were issued both in the name of the leader and the people.

35. Sircar, D. C. SI, op.cit. p. 178.

36. Proceedings, ASB, Pp. 138-140. 1884.

37. Sircar, D. C. op. cit. p. 265.

38. Ādi. 105.4.

39. Sabhā. 29.13, 48.13 ; Droṇa. 6.6, 16.19. respectively.

40. Aṣṭādhyāyī. 4.2.131, K.A.11.1.

41. Sircar, D. C. Op.cit. p. 265.

42. Droṇa. 4.5.

43. Sabhā. 48.12.

44. Allan, J. Op.cit. Pp. lxxxii-lxxxvi.

The Śivis were an ancient people, who have been referred to as being defeated by Nakula⁴⁵ in the western direction. They had also come to offer presents to Yudhishthira.⁴⁶ They fought on the Kaurava side⁴⁷ and were killed by the soldiers of the Pāṇḍavas.⁴⁸ The Greek writers locate them in the vicinity of the Mālavas.⁴⁹ They resided in the Jhhunga region to the south of the confluence of the Jhelam and Chenab rivers. It seems that they also were hard pressed by the foreign aggressions, hence, migrated to Rajaputana, where at Nāgarī near Chittor, their coins have been found, which are struck in the name of the people (Majhamikāya Śivi Janapadasa), and belong to 2nd century B.C.⁵⁰ After that we have no references to their political existence.

The Basāti people had come to offer presents to Yudhishthira⁵¹ although they fought on the Kaurava side.⁵² They are identified with the Ossadioi people as referred to by the Greek writers.⁵³ They were settled in the region of the confluence of the rivers Chenab and Sutlaj with the Indus. Patañjali refers to them along with the Śivis.⁵⁴

The Śālvakas⁵⁵ are enumerated along with the republican people such as the Basāti and Ambashthas, who were invited by the Kauravas to fight on their side. This type of reference shows that they also were a republican people. But details are lacking regarding their republican character.

The Pañchkarpaṭa⁵⁶ republic is referred to along with

45. Sabbhā. 29.6.

46. Ibid. 48.13.

47. Droṇa. 6.6.

48. Karṇa. 4.37.

49. McCrindle, J. W. IIAG. p. 366.

50. Allan, J. Op.cit. Pp. cxxiii-cxxv.

51. Sabbhā. 48.14.

52. Udyoga. 30.23 ; Karṇa. 4.36.

53. For details see Jayaswal, K. P. Op.cit. p. 64.

54. Patañjali on Pāṇini, 4.2.52.

55. Udyoga. 30.23.

56. Sabbhā. 29.6.

other republics like the Śivi, Trigarta, Mālava and Ambashthas but their exact location is not mentioned. Their coins are not found, so, it is difficult to locate and identify them, but it seems that they resided in the Punjab in the neighbourhood of the above mentioned republican states.

The Vaimakas⁵⁷ had established a republican state, and the epic places them along with the Audumbaras. Their coins are found in the Hoshiarpur district of the Punjab, and are similar to the Audumbara coins.⁵⁸

The Sāvitrī-Putra⁵⁹ republic existed in the Punjab, and was formed on the line of the Āyudhajivin Saṁghas. The epic refers to them⁶⁰ who resided in the neighbourhood of the Uśinara people in the Punjab. Their coins are not found, so it is difficult to find out the exact location of their homeland in that territory.

The Mahābhārata refers to the republics on the banks of the river Indus⁶¹ which were very powerful and prosperous. But, it does not refer to their particular names. Further investigations may throw light on the names of such republics which were many in numbers.

The Ambashthas have been referred to as being defeated by Nakula in the western direction. They had come to offer presents to Yudhishthira.⁶² They have been referred to as fighting on the Kaurava side,⁶³ and being killed by Yudhishthira along with the soldiers of other Gaṇas like the Mālava, Trigarta and Śivi.⁶⁴ The Greek writers refer to them as Abastanoi, a strong military people with a democratic form of

57. Ibid. 48.12.

58. Gupta, P. L. Bearing of the Numismatics on the history of Tribal republics in Ancient India, IHQ, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 197.

59. Agrawala, V. S. Op.cit. p. 446.

60. Karna. 4.47.

61. Sabhā. 29.8.

62. Sabhā. 29.6.8 ; 48.14.

63. Udyoga. 30.23.

64. Drona. 132.23.

Govt.⁶⁵ They resided in the Chenab valley in the neighbourhood of the Kshudraka-Mālavas.

The Rājanyas have been referred to in connection with those people who had come to offer presents to Yudhishtira, although they fought on the Kaurava side.⁶⁶ Those were an ancient people, and are known to Pāṇini also.⁶⁷ A large number of their coins issued in the name of their Janapada have been found in the Hoshiyarapur district of the Punjab which belong to the period from the 2nd to the 1st century B.C.⁶⁸ It seems that due to some reasons, they migrated to the Mathura region where also their coins are found.

The Kuṇindas have been mentioned as being defeated by Arjuna in their territory.⁶⁹ On the basis of the find spots of their coins (1st century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.) it may be assumed that they resided in the valley of the Sutlaj and the Yamunā rivers in the foot hills of the Sivalika range, even up to Saharanpur in U.P.⁷⁰

Besides referring to the republics in the Punjab and western Uttar-Pradesh, the Mahābhārata mentions some of the republics which existed in Sindh and Saurāshtra. The Śūdra Gaṇāḥ were defeated by Arjuna in the Sarasvatī valley in Sindh, and they had their own Janapada after their name.⁷¹ They have been referred to as fighting on the Kaurava side.⁷²

There are references to another important and interesting republican people, the Ābhīras who resided in the neighbourhood of the Śūdras in the Sarasvatī valley. They have been referred to as being defeated by Arjuna.⁷³ Their

65. McCrindle, J. W. *Op.cit.* Pp. 252 & 292.

66. *Sabhā.* 48.13 & *Droṇa.* 132.25.

67. *Ashṭādhyāyī*, 4.2.53.

68. Allan, J. *Op.cit.* p. cxxiii.

69. *Sabhā.* 23. 13-14, *Bhisma.* 10.61.

70. Allan, J. *Op.cit.* ci-civ.

71. *Sabhā.* 29.9 & *Bhishma.* 10.46.

72. *Droṇa.* 6.6.

73. *Sabhā.* 29.9.

territory⁷⁴ corresponds to the Abiria of the Greek writers in the Indus valley. In the Allahabad inscription of Samudra-Gupta⁷⁵ they have been referred to as a republican people, who did not reside in the Indus valley, but in the present Madhya Pradesh near Sāñchī, so it seems that by that time they had migrated to that place from the Indus valley.

The Kukuras have been referred to in connection with those Gaṇas who had come to offer presents to Yudhishṭhira.⁷⁶ Kauṭilya⁷⁷ refers to them as a republican people. It seems that during the political predominance of the Kshatrapas they lost their political existence.

The Kshatriyas had come to offer present to Yudhishṭhir.⁷⁸ Kauṭilya refers to them as a republican people⁷⁹ and those are identified with the Xathroi⁸⁰ people as mentioned by the Greek writers. The present Sindhi Khatri are regarded as their descendents.

The Malla⁸¹ republic has been enumerated along with the Madra, Vāṭadhāna, Ābhīra and Śūdra republics. They resided in the Malla Janapada. At present, it is very difficult to identify them, as their coins are not available, and literary works also do not help us. But, it seems that they resided somewhere in the Punjab or Sindh. We do not know the exact relationship of the Mallas of this region with those of Kuśīnārā and Pāvāpurī which is situated in the eastern Uttar Pradesh. It seems that the eastern Mallas were a branch of the Mallas in the Indus valley who had migrated to eastern U.P. long before the advent of the Buddha. But, the possibility of their migration from the east to the west also cannot

74. Bhīshma. 10.45.

75. Sircar, D. C. Op.cit. p. 265.

76. Sabhā. 48.15.

77. K.A. 11.1.

78. Sabhā. 48.16.

79. K.A. 11.1.

80. Jayaswal, K. P. Op.cit. p. 64.

81. Bhīshma. 10.40.46.

be ruled out perhaps during the sixth century B.C. due to the political pressure from the rising powers of the Magadha and Kośala.

The most important republic in the Mahābhārata is that of the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis. It is the same to the epic what Lichchhavi-Vrijji republic is to the Buddhist literature. The Saṅgha-Mukhya of this republic was Kṛishṇa. The principles of the republican Govt. as discussed by the Mahābhārata have been dealt with in connection with this republic.⁸² Pāṇini⁸³ refers to it. They had settled in Saurāshṭra with Dvārakā as their headquarters.⁸⁴ We get their coins, which on Palaeographic basis, belong to the 1st century B.C. and bear the legend "Vṛishṇi Rājanya Gaṇasya Tratarasa" in Brāhmī and Kharoshthī. Perhaps, after the 1st century A.D. they lost their independence to the Śaka-Kshatrapas.

The epic refers to the republic of the utsava-Saṁketas⁸⁵ as being defeated by Arjuna. It seems that this republic was founded by two persons named Utsava and Saṁketa or by two tribes of above names. From the specific references it appears that the Utsava-Saṁketa republic was situated in the Himalayan region in the vicinity of Kashmir.⁸⁶ Jayaswal has located it near Pushkar⁸⁷ in Rajasthan, which appears to be wrong.

The epic refers to Bhīma's victory on the Mallānāmadhīpa during his military expedition in the eastern direction. He defeated him after defeating the king of Uttara Kośala.⁸⁸ It also mentions the defeat of the Dakṣhiṇa Mallas by Bhīma after his conquest of the Vatsa country.⁸⁹ These references

82. ŚP. Chapters 82 & 108.

83. Aṣṭādhyāyī 6.2.34.

84. Āraṇyaka. chapters 16-17.

85. Sabhā. 29.8.

86. Ibid. 29.8-9.

87. Jayaswal, K. P. Op.cit. p. 150.

88. Sabhā. 27.3.

89. Ibid. 27.11.

indicate that the Mahābhārata intends to refer to two branches of the Mallas, one in the vicinity of the Uttara Kośala, and the Dakṣiṇa-Mallas in the vicinity of the Vatsa country. From the Buddhist sources it is known that during the sixth century B.C. the former Mallas were a republican people having their headquarters at Kuśinārā in the present Deoria district of eastern U. P. It is difficult to identify the area of the Dakṣiṇa Mallas.

In the early Buddhist literature, the Bhagga republic is referred to, but after the 6th century B.C., references to them are not found. These correspond to the Bhargas of Samskrita. The Epic refers to them⁹⁰ in the vicinity of the Vatsa country. The location of their territory seems to be convincing as in the Buddhist literature they have been mentioned as residing in the area of Sumsumāragiri, in the district of Mirzapur in eastern U.P.

The republican constitution.

The most developed stage of the republican constitution was the Saṃgha organisation, but there were many stages of its development also, as some were aristocratic oligarchies, some were of the Rājanya variety,⁹¹ and some constitutions were associated with the whole Janapada with the sovereign right to issue coins. In the republics of the Yaudheyas, Andhaka-Vṛishṇis and the Audumbaras the coins were issued in the names of the Gaṇa, Rājanya and the Janapada respectively.

The republics had organised their general assemblies. In a republican state, all the persons were not entitled to be the members of the Gaṇa-Sabhā,⁹² but only a class or a few classes were entitled to rulership, and were known as Rājās. This group was the ruling section in the whole population, and among them, there was equality of birth and equality of

91. Ibid. 27. 11.

Kula.⁹¹ In the Andhaka-Vṛishnī republic, some persons only had the title of “Rājan” as the descendents of Svāphalaka, Chaitraka, Śīni, and of Vasudeva.⁹² The descendents of the founder families were entitled to exercise sovereign powers, and the heads of such families represented their Kulas in the Gaṇa or the Saṁgha Sabhā. Kauṭilya also refers to the Rājaśabdopajivin Saṁghas or those republican organisations whose members had the title of the “Rājas”.⁹³ Those members were consecrated to rulership.

The Kula basis of the republics is known from many other sources also. The family was the lowest unit of representation, and the head of the family represented his family in the assembly.⁹⁴ Pāṇini refers to the representatives of the families in the Andhaka Vṛishnī republic, and Kātyāyana says that those belonged to such families which were entitled to be consecrated to rulership.⁹⁵ Kṛishṇa has referred to 98 leading Kulas among the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis.⁹⁶ The one hundred sons of Sāritrī had organised a republic after their names the “Sāvitrīputrāḥ”⁹⁷ with the title “Rājan” applied to each of them.

If all the Kulas were equal in social and political status, then, how the matter of the headship of the republic was decided? The Mahābhārata furnishes very interesting information which helps us in knowing the significance of a technical term; the “Pārameshṭhaya” which occurs in the Aitereya Brāhmaṇa denoting a type of state. It informs that the “Pārameshṭhaya” was based on the sovereignty vested in the Kulas.⁹⁸ In this type, the headship of state was not vested in a particular family, but it shifted from time to time

91. ŚP. 108.30.

92. Ashtādhyāyī, 6.2.34.

93. K.A. 11.1.

94. ŚP. 108.27., Sabhā. 13.31.

95. Ashtādhyāyī, 5.2.34., Agrwala, V. S. Op.cit. p. 428.

96. Sabhā. 13.34, 58.

97. Āraṇyaka. 98.1.57., Karṇa. 4.47. Cf. Pāṇini, Op.cit. 5.3.116.

98. Sabhā. 14.5-6.

from one to another, and the person became the "Param-Śreshtha" or the Sovereign head of the state.⁹⁹ This polity was based on the terms of peace as opposed to the policy of force in the "Sāmrajya" state.¹⁰⁰ These characteristics of the "Pārameshthaya" polity show that the republics respected the human dignity and cultivated the democratic spirit.¹⁰¹ The epic is the only literature which explains the "Pārameshthaya"¹⁰² type of the political headship of a republican state based on the Kula system. If we accept this interpretation, then there should be no hesitation in accepting the existence of the republican states in our country during the period of the Brāhmaṇa literature circa 8th to the 6th century B.C. Our hypothesis becomes more apparent, when we see the existence of the fully developed republics in eastern India during the sixth century B.C. This date may be pushed back to two or one century earlier, as it was not possible for the republics which were fully developed by the 6th century B.C. to reach that stage of political development within a few decades only.

The shifting headship of the state gave birth to party-system in the assembly. Regarding the Andhaka-Vṛishni Saṁgha, there are many such references in the epic.¹⁰³ While referring to this republic, the Kāśikā cites the Kṛishṇavargya and Akrūraavargya as illustrations to the grammatical rules.¹⁰⁴ The epic also refers to the groups led by Akrūra and others. Again, the Kāśikā informs that headship was known as the "Paramatā" and the head of all the parties was known as the

99. Sabhā. 14.5-6.

100. Ibid. 14.5.

101. Ibid. 14.4.

102. For details see, Shukla, Devidatta, Prāchīna Bhārata men Janatantra, pp. 81-82.

103. ŚP. chapters 82 and 108.

104. Agrawala, V. S. Mahābhārata—Cultural Commentary, Abori, Vol. 37. Pts. 1-4. p. 19ff.

“Paramavargya”¹⁰⁵ in the Andhaka-Vṛishṇi republic. The Aitereya Brāhmaṇa refers to the words “Śraishṭhya” and “Paramatā”¹⁰⁶ in the form of political terms relating to the republican Govt. The person elected as the head of the state by all the families was known as the “Śreshṭha”.¹⁰⁷ “Paramatā” conveyed the leadership of the party. Every party was known as the “Varga” and each member a “Vargya” hence the leader naturally would be known as the “Paramavargya”. Thus the Govt. composed of the party leaders, was known as the “Pārameshṭhaya” but the headship of the state shifted from one man to another from time to time.¹⁰⁸ The Mahābhārata refers to the parties of Vāsudeva and Akrura in the Andhaka-Vṛishṇi republic, and the same is known from Pāṇini and Patañjali also.¹⁰⁹

The whole Sabhā could not carry on administrative affairs on account of the large number of its members so it organised a small body consisting of a few persons, who were known as the Gaṇamukhyas. The epic suggests that the jurisdiction to conduct the community should be mainly vested in them and they should obey the President. It does not mention the strength of executive, but it seems that there were bodies, one being the general executive organised by the Gaṇamukhyas and the other was the inner-cabinet consisting of two or three persons in charge of formulation and preservation of Mantra or the state’s policies. The executive carried on the policies adopted by the inner-cabinet.

The Saṁghamukhya was the highest executive officer, and all members of the executive assisted him in the execu-

105. Kāśikā, 6.2.131.

106. Ait.Br. 8.15.

107. Sabhā. 14.6.

108. Ibid. 14.5-6.

109. Pāṇini, Op.cit, 4.2.34., For Patanjali see Agrawala, V. S. Op.cit. p. 431.

110. ŚP. 82.5, 25.

tion of policies. In the Andhaka vṛiṣṇi republic there were two Presidents one being kṛiṣṇa and the other Ugrasena, so the former regarded himself as the Ardhabhoktā of sovereignty. The Saṅghamukhya was elected or nominated by all members of the assembly and in that republic there was no hereditary post of the President. The epic mentions some of the requisites for the candidate seeking election or nomination for that post.

It asserts that a great man, one of mastermind, and commanding a following, can successfully exert himself in carrying a high political responsibility. Nārada says to Kṛiṣṇa that every ox can bear on it a heavy burden and carry it on plain ground, but it is only a noble and experienced animal that can carry a difficult burden through a difficult path. So, the President should be a man of high qualities, such as he should have tact and tolerance, liberality, and should be expert in knowing the past and present policies of the state.¹¹³

The duties to be performed by him have been mentioned. It is his duty to keep unity in the Saṅgha, remembering the fact that its destruction lies in disunion. The republican polity is based on group politics, hence bitter speeches are delivered by the opposition parties and personal remarks are frequent, so, it is difficult to maintain unity and cohesion among the members of the Saṅgha. Kṛiṣṇa Himself was a victim of bitter speeches delivered by the rival parties, and his heart between these was like the wood which a man desirous of producing fire was twirling, which consumed him every day. He was like the mother of two gamblers against each other, who can neither desire the victory of

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid. 82.23-24.

113. Ibid. 82.25 & 28.

114. Ibid. 82.25.

one nor the defeat of other. The President, thus, was a distressed man. He remarks, "For whom in whose favour they were, there was everything, but if they were not so then one cannot exist and the President cannot choose the party of the members instituted on group basis and rivalry."¹¹⁶ In this situation, the President had to act tactfully but patiently. Nārada advises Kṛishṇa that in such a situation, the President of a republican state should use a weapon which is not made of steel, and yet it is capable of piercing all hearts. By continuous sharpening he has to rectify the tongues of the kinsmen, but, that weapon consists of recognition of merit in others and honouring them, mildness, straightforwardness, tolerance and constant entertainment according to their capabilities.¹¹⁷ He should not mind for bitter and light speeches and it is his duty to appease their minds, sentiments and tongues by his sweet reply. Kautilya also expresses some what similar views.¹¹⁸

The hope of material gain, caprice and fear from bitter speeches are dangerous to the very existence of the republican state, and these factors force one group to leave the headship, but in future, it becomes too difficult to regain the lost power. The forceful repulsion of the groups results in serious loss and waste, and there is the fear of extermination, so it is the President's duty to act tactfully to preserve unity in the Saṁgha for the survival of the republican state.¹¹⁹

The formulation of Mantra was an important matter to be discharged by the executive, but the more important thing was the preservation of its secrecy as in an assembly of many¹²⁰ it is difficult to do so. Hence, the affairs of Mantra

115. Ibid. 82.5-6, 11-12.

116. ŚP. 82.7-10.

117. Ibid. 82.19-21.

118. K. A. Adhikaraṇa, 11.

119. ŚP. 82.14-22.

120. ŚP. 108.6-8.

should be under the charge of only a few persons, and all the Gaṇas are not entitled to know of it.¹²¹ They formulated the policy and being assembled together thought of the means for the state's prosperity.¹²² Archaeological evidences also prove it. The Sonait seal of the Yaudhayas has been issued in the name of the "Mantradharāh" but their coins are struck in the name of the Gaṇa.¹²³ The seal indicates that the ministers were vested with the authority of policy.

The foreign policy is an important matter. The matters of espionage are its backbones so the intelligence service and matters relating to the downfall of foes should be vested with the chiefs.¹²⁴ Dissension is the root cause of the downfall of republics, so the foes try to do so by despatching their spies to them, hence in order to guard against this, the espionage was looked after by the executive.

The republican states were the Nations-in-Arms in order to preserve their independence, hence the epic asserts that heroic persons accomplished in the art of handling the weapons prosper, and help others during calamities.¹²⁵ The Greek writers have described the military skill of the western Indian republics, which were the Nations-in-Arms and had resisted Alexander bravely. The heroic resistance¹²⁶ of the Śālva's invasion on Dvārakā by the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis shows that the republican states could resist even the mighty enemies. They maintained a standing and well organised army. The soldiers were well equipped with arms, were well trained in warfare, and salary was regularly paid to them.¹²⁷

121. Ibid. 108.24.

122. Ibid. 108.19 & 25.

123. Jayaswal, K. P. Op.cit p. 71., Mazumdar, B. P. Political theory and practice in the Mālava and Yaudheya republics, JIH, Vol. 47, pl. 2, p. 306.

124. ŚP. 108.19 & 24.

125. Ibid. 108.21.

126. Āraṇyaka. Chapters 16-17.

127. Ibid.

The military affairs were looked after by the Senāpati, who was also a member of the executive.

Without a solid economic foundation, a state cannot carry on its administrative or military responsibilities, so, a republican state keeping this matter in view, always attempted to enrich its treasury. The realisation of revenue to the national exchequer is one of the reasons for the prosperity of the Gaṇa state.¹²⁸ It seems that the economic affairs were in the hands of a minister, who worked for the material prosperity of the people.

Justice should be imparted to all, and the law breakers must be punished for social security and economic prosperity. So the Mahābhārata instructs the "Saṅghamukhaya" that criminal justice should be administered promptly by the learned men experts in laws, because, if disputes arise in the Kulas, and the elders remain indifferent, then they destroy the race, and consequently the republic is dissolved.¹²⁹ Furtheemore, it asserts that the good Gaṇas prosper because they establish valid legal procedures according to the Śāstras, and are fair to one another.¹³⁰ The Buddhist literature also reveals the fact that the republics gave more attention to the administration of justice and the Lichchhavi-Vajji Saṅgha was very particular in this matter.

Merits and demerits of the republics :

The Mahābhārata refers to the inherent merits and demerits which were found in the republican form of government. The straightforwardness of the elders, mutual understanding and good relations, valid legal procedures and fairness of behaviour are the good points in the good

128. ŚP. 108.19.

129. Ibid. 108.26-28.

130. Ibid. 108.17.

republics.¹³¹ Besides these, there is complete equality of status of all the elders who are the members of the Gaṇasabhā. In this set up, there was no discrimination, and the sense of equality was cultivated, though it was limited to a few privileged families. Such Gaṇas prosper because they train and discipline their sons and brothers, and accept only those who have been well-trained.¹³² The good Gaṇas always prosper as they are careful to the working of the espionage-service, matters of policy and collection of taxes, further-more, they pay due honour to their officers, who are competent, dutiful and enthusiastic.¹³³ The good Gaṇas are wealthy, heroic, versed in the Śāstras and accomplished in the arts of warfare, and such Gaṇas are the helpers to the helpless ones.¹³⁴ A historical survey of our ancient republican states shows that actually, all these merits were found in the good and prosperous Gaṇas.

There were some demerits in them which were dangerous to their very existence. Formation of groups under different leaders was very defective in the set up of a republican state, as it gave birth to group rivalry. The epic presents the example of group rivalry in the Andhaka-Vṛishṇi Saṅgha. Akrūra and Āhuka, the leaders of the Andhakas and Vṛishṇis respectively led the federal Parliament. Kṛishṇa, the Saṅgha-mukya in spite of having brave, energetic, learned and skilled kinsmen, had to suffer from their group rivalries.¹³⁵

Preservation of Mantra also was a difficult problem in them. Lack of the sense of responsibility also was a demerit, hence the republican state deteriorated. With limited economic resources and hardpressed by military engagements they died out.

131. Ibid. 108.16-17.

132. Ibid. 108.18.

133. Ibid. 108.19-20.

134. Ibid. 108.21.

135. Ibid. 82. 7-10.

Dangers and their removal :

There are two types of dangers to the republican states namely the internal and external.¹³⁶ The policy of division and creation of negligence are applied by the foes in order to break the Gaṇas.¹³⁷ Kautilya advises the king to adopt these policies against the saṅgha states for that purpose, because due to unity among them, they are not easily defeated. He advises the Saṅghas to guard against these matters applied to them by others.¹³⁸

The external dangers are insignificant, these can be removed easily but the internal ones are more destructive to them, so, these are to be removed promptly.¹³⁹

Nārada points out the internal dangers and considers them as the results of the acts of the members of the Gaṇa,¹⁴⁰ which they create keeping in their minds the idea of something to gain. This idea originates from avarice, one yielding to it becomes follows jealous, these two are the main provoking causes of enmity among the Gaṇas as well as among the Kulas of the Rājās, and these two entailing waste and decay, lead to mutual destruction.¹⁴¹ The epic presents an example of the dangers faced by the Andhaka-Vrishṇi republic caused by its own members under the leadership of Akrūra and Āhuka. In this rivalry and group politics for gaining power, the opposite parties oppress each other through spies, intrigues, military force, the policy of conciliation, subsidy and division, and by applying other means of decay, waste and dangers.¹⁴² The republics are divided by these means, and being so, they become indifferent to the common cause, and ultimately through fear, they are subjugated by the enemies. Thus the Gaṇas being

136. Ibid. 82.13.

137. Ibid. 198.31.

138. K. A. Adhikaraṇa. 11.

139. ŚP. 108.28-29.

140. Ibid. 82.14.

141. Ibid. 108.12-14.

142. Ibid. 108.12-14.

divided surely perish, because being separated they fall and become easy prey to the enemy.¹⁴³ In the same manner, Kauṭilya also prescribes the methods in order to weaken the Saṁgha by creating dissension among them so that they may be controlled by the monarch.¹⁴⁴ On account of this, the epic instructs the republics to exert themselves through the system of confederacy (Saṁghātayogen) because material prosperity is obtained by the prowess of the confederated strength (Saṁghāta-bala-paurushaiḥ) and even the outsiders seek alliance of Confederate entities.¹⁴⁵ Kauṭilya expresses similar views and prefers the Saṁghalābha (friendly relations with the confederation of republics) than Daṇḍalābha (military assistance), and Mitralābha (Getting friends), on account of their invincibility.¹⁴⁶

The Gaṇas fall at once into the clutches of the foes due to anger, dissension, absence of mutual confidence, military violence, tyranny, oppression and killing among themselves.¹⁴⁷ In this case, the wealth dwindles down, and misfortune follows on account of their division.¹⁴⁸ The Mahābharata refers to the symptoms of discomfiture in the confederation, that in this case the members cease to discuss among themselves on account of uncalled for anger, foolishness and mutual avarice.¹⁴⁹

The epic refers to the means and methods for the removal of dangers in order to make the confederation prosperous. The foremost duty of the Gaṇas in this respect is to preserve unity among themselves because disunity is the main cause their destruction. For this, they should cultivate high

143. Ibid.

144. K. A. Adhikaraṇa, 11.

145. ŚP. 108.14-15.

146. K. A. Adhikaraṇa, 11.

147. ŚP. 108.22.

148. Ibid. 108.25-26.

149. Ibid. 108.29-30.

moral virtues and should remove greed for power and enmity caused by it. In order to guard against the leakage of the state's policies, its affairs should be given to a few chiefs of the Saṁgha. The espionage service should be efficient, and economic stability be maintained. The Gaṇas being gathered together should discuss the matters of the state's affairs. In order to remove rivalry, personal enmity and groupism, the President should be very tolerant, and bitter speeches by the members be silenced with sweet words and mild behaviour by him. The kins-men should be well treated, and he should work in such a way so that the Saṁgha may not decline. Criminal justice should be administered promptly and quickly, as delay in it results in evil. The elders should settle the disputes tactfully. The Gaṇas cannot be broken up by prowess or cleverness nor by temptation of beauty but through the policy of division, and due to their Pramāda in preserving the unity and maintaining the confederacy,¹⁵⁰

A study of republics shows that they were not trully republican states like the present democracies, because the whole population was not represented in the Gaṇasabhā. Only a few privileged classes were entitled to exercise political powers, so these were aristocratic oligarchies.

The epic informs that life in republican states was very prosperous, and it is evident from the description of the life of the Andhaka-Vrishṇis in the Āraṇyaka and Mausal Parvans. They became very prosperous under the Presidentship of Krishṇa.¹⁵¹ The military might and economic prosperity of the republics are evident from the fact that they retained their existence for about 1000 years from the 6th or 5th century B.C. to the 4th century A.D.

150. Ibid. 108.30-31.

151. Udyoga. 28.12.

Chapter VII

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

The theorists of the Mahābhārata consider the ministers as essential in the scheme of statecraft, and their importance may be assumed from the fact that like other treaties the epic also includes them in the list of the seven constituents of state. With the widening of the scope of state's activities, their necessity became inevitable for advising and assisting the king in the affairs of state. It is physically impossible for a king to perform all the state-affairs alone, as it is difficult for a person even to perform an easy task single handed, it is rather impracticable for him to perform the state's affairs without the assistance of others.¹ Kauṭilya also expresses the same view when he mentions that a single wheel does not move the whole carriage, and so, the king cannot perform the affairs of state; hence the ministers are essential.² Manu has also advanced similar view for the same reason.³ The epic, while laying emphasis on their necessity, announces that administrative machinery cannot be run even for three days,⁴ and the goal cannot be reached without their assistance.⁵ So, the king should appoint them for guidance and assistance as they are his strength.

Different terms :

The epic contains many terms for them, such as Mantrin,

1. ŚP. 81.1.
2. K.A. 1.3.
3. Manu. 7.55.
4. ŚP. 107.11., 112.22.
5. Ibid. 116.13.
6. Ibid. 121.42.

Sachiva and Amātya. The terms Mantradhārin⁷ and Mantrasahāya⁸ are synonymous for Mantrin. Sometimes, the term Sahāyavān⁹ also is used in the sense of minister, but its use is not so numerous as we see in case of the Mantrin, Sachiva and Amātya. These three terms carry different meanings.

Mantrin is an adviser to the king and formulates the state's policies, Sachiva is his helper, and Amātya is one who lives near him and may be regarded as his private Secretary.¹ The epic does not differentiate these terms from each other and uses them in the same sense of a minister. Kauṭilya, however, differentiates Amātya from Mantrin, the former being a junior officer-in charge of the department, and latter an adviser to the king, hence he higher in rank to the former.² The term Sachiva also is used in the sense of the minister-in-charge of a department, and his duty is to advise the king also. As such the terms Karmasachiva and Matisachiva have been used in the sense of ministers in inscriptions as well.³ The epic refers to Matisāchivya,⁴ but it does not distinguish Sachiva from Amātya as the same Sachivas of the Kaliṅga king are referred to as the Amātyas, with whose consultations policies were formulated.⁵ Amātya is not a different person, but a minister, as the same Amātyas in Amātyaparīṣhad of king Somaka are referred to as Mantrins,⁶ and the same Amātya is designated as Mantrin who had killed his lord.⁷ Thus, though these terms technically carry different meanings,

7. Udyoga. 31.11.

8. ŚP. 84.13.

9. Ibid. 57.23-25.

10. Kane, P. V., Hist. Dh. Vol.3., p. 104.

11. K.A. 1.9.

12. EI. Vol. 8., p. 36 (The Giranara Prasaṣṭi of Rudradāmana).

13. ŚP. 112.39.

14. Āraṇyaka. 110. 27-29.

15. Ibid. 127.8-10.

16. Ibid. 283.3-5.

yet in the epic they have been used in the sense of ministers without any distinction.

Types of ministers :

A perusal of inscriptions and literature reveals that in actual practice there existed different types of ministers, The Giranāra Praśasti of Rudradāmana refers to two types of Sachiva ; the Matisachiva and Karmasachiva, i.e. ministers who advised the king and excuted the plans respectively. It seems that in council, there were two classes of ministers. The epic refers to Matisāchivya,¹⁸ the post of advising ministers, and Nṛipatehmatidāh¹⁹ are the same as the Matisachivāh. Hence the existence of the sub-class or committee of advising ministers is proved by the epigraphic evidence also. The term Karmasachiva does not occur in the epic but the existence of this class of ministers may be assumed, as it refers to the Matisachiva. So, it seems that the Karmasachivas also were in existence.

Besides this classification, based on the nature of works to be performed by them, the epic classifies them as good and bad ministers on the basis of their being loyal or disloyal to king.²⁰ But these terms do not contain constitutional significance.

Nārada classifies the Bhṛityas into three classes, namely the Mukhya, Madhyama and Jaghanya according to their efficiency.²¹ Ministers also may be regarded as Bhṛityas ; hence, on the basis of their efficiency they also may be classified into those three classes.

17. Circar, D.C. SI. p. 180.

18. ŚP. 112.39.

19. Ibid. 116.16.

20. Ibid. 112.22., 93.9.

21. Sabhā. 5.32.

Qualifications of ministers :

The working of state's machinery and prosperity of people depend on ministers, hence, Vidura advances the view that the king should not appoint persons as ministers without examining their qualifications and abilities.²² So, such persons should be appointed as ministers, who have been well examined, are serving the state from many generations, and having controlled their senses behave well.²³ Those persons should be appointed as ministers who are of high birth, are humble and learned.²⁴ Besides these, they should be brave, loyal, humble, wealthy, should have good company, wide learning and the sense of self respect. They should be firm in resolve and very efficient in knowing the movements of foes.²⁵ But these virtues are not enough. Moreover, the Mahābhārata furnishes some other virtues to be possessed by the persons, who are to be appointed as ministers ; such as, they should be very intelligent, skilful, kind, mature, should have sharp memory, and their minds should not be affected either by honour or insult by the king.²⁶ Tolerance, eloquence, bravery, nobility, learning and power of discrimination are the virtues to be sought in persons to be appointed as ministers.²⁷ They should be sons of the soil, trustworthy, humble, not egoistic, physically well-built, should have patience, purity, forgiveness, affection, understanding-power, and methods and means to act tactfully according to the time and place factors for the state's welfare.²⁸

Only high birth and theoretical knowledge are not the main basis to be kept in view for appointing them. Bāhudantīputra, as quoted by Kautilya, is of the opinion that

22. Udyoga. 33.18-20.

23. Āśrama. 9.14.

24. Ibid. 9.19-21.

25. ŚP. 57.23-25.

26. Ibid. 81.22-23.

27. Ibid. 81.21-29.

28. Ibid. 84.17-22.

practical efficiency, and personal merits are the main things to be sought in persons to be appointed as ministers.²⁹ The epic also does not consider a person even of high birth, fit for ministership, who has little knowledge and has no practical experience to examine and formulate the state's policies.³⁰ Besides these, he should be of firm resolve, because even a wise, learned and skilful minister cannot achieve the objectives, if he is not a man of firm resolve.³¹

The persons, even having all virtues, are not to be appointed as ministers, if they are not loyal to the king. Parāśara,³² a predecessor of Kauṭilya, gives the dictum that the king should appoint such a person as his minister who has shown many times the highest type of loyalty to him, even endangering his life for him. According to the epic the king has not to appoint unloyal persons as his ministers, and has not to have faith in them.

The persons to be appointed as ministers should not have seven Vyasanās, but must possess the eight virtues.³⁴ The epic does not refer to the latter, but from other sources it is known that the eight virtues are to serve the king, to hear matters for his welfare, hear minutely, understand clearly, to sharp memory, think over the matters carefully, to accept things after logical considerations, discuss and consider the means for the attainment of objectives, to have experience in Śilpavyavahāra and to know the realities.³⁵ The seven Vyasanās to be discarded are hunting, dicing, indulgence in sexual enjoyment, drinking wine, cheating, abusing, and destroying the things of others without valid reasons.³⁶

29. K.A. 1.7.

30. ŚP. 84.23-24.

31. Ibid. 84.27.

32. K.A. 1.7.

33. ŚP. 84.21-29.

34. Ibid. 86.6-10.

35. Mbh. (G.P). Vol. v, pp. 4645, F. No. 1.

36. Ibid. F. No. 2.

Piśuna thinks that those persons should be appointed as ministers who have served the state for a long time and have proved their efficiency and practical wisdom.³⁷ According to the theorists of the epic also such persons are to be appointed as ministers who have long administrative experience, are brave and have practical wisdom, as might and wisdom being combined together, cause the objectives of the state to be achieved.³⁸ The ministers, inspite of having all these virtues, cannot work efficiently if they organise groups within the ministry, so those persons should be appointed as ministers who do not organise groups and create frictions.³⁹ There are references to groups in the ministry of the Kośala king Kshemadarśin.⁴⁰

The epic has laid emphasis on high birth of ministers, and it is not without foundations, as the king in association with persons of low birth cannot be happy, because such persons after getting higher posts of ministers and achieving prosperity, turn as foes to their lord; but the persons of high birth, even being insulted by him without any justification, do not harm him after being provoked by his enemies.⁴¹ So, on account of these reasons, Bhishma and Nārada have advised Yudhishthira to appoint persons of high birth⁴² as his ministers who are also learned, wise and experienced.

Kaṇvaśāstra,⁴³ a predecessor of Kautilya gives more emphasis on the appointment of those persons as ministers who have served the king from many generations, on the ground that, such persons are well acquainted with the states affairs, and possess high sense of loyalty. The epic also

37. K.A. 1.7.

38. ŚP. 107.6 & 12.

39. Ibid. 112.23-24.

40. Ibid. Ch.83.

41. Ibid. 118. 4-7.

42. Ibid. 140. 29-30., Sabhā, 5.16-17.

43. K.A. 1.7.

furnishes similar view.⁴⁴ Though, this system has some defects, yet it was a popular principle to be followed by kings in appointing their ministers.

The epic does not value more number of ministers, but their qualities, as even a single but qualified minister can make the state prosperous.⁴⁵ The Rāmāyaṇa also furnishes the same information.⁴⁶

The person fit for the premiership should be physically well built and handsome, his voice should be very melodious, should be of high birth, cultured, should follow the rules of good conduct, possess forbearance and should be a well tested person.⁴⁷

The epic discusses the disqualifications also which are found in ministers, and instructs the king to discard the persons of low quality. Life and property of subjects cannot be protected if the king is advised by wicked ministers.⁴⁸ The story of sage Kalakavṛikshīya narrates that how the wicked ministers weaken the state by stealing away its property and organising groups.⁴⁹

Are all these virtues to be sought in the persons to be appointed as ministers? It seems that all these things have been mentioned for the guidance of the king while appointing ministers, he should keep all these things in his mind, and appoint those persons who possess the maximum numbers of qualifications.

The epic illustrates that in actual practice competent persons were appointed as ministers. The ministers of the Aṅga king were versed in the matters of Mantra,⁵⁰ Vidura the minister of Dhṛitarāshṭra was intelligent, learned, and

44. Sabhā. 5.33., Āśrama, 9.14.

45. Ibid. 5.26.

46. V.R. Ayodhyā. 100.24.

47. ŚP. 81. 21, 26-27.

48. Āraṇyaka. 1.12.

49. ŚP. ch. 83.

50. Āraṇyaka. 110.27-30.

cultured. The military skill of ministers of Duryodhana was seen in his expedition against king Virāṭa.⁵¹ Loyalty of ministers may be illustrated from this fact that after the death of Parikshita, his ministers coronated his infant son as king, and looked after the administrative affairs.⁵³ A perusal of ancient Indian inscriptions reveals that in actual practice such persons were appointed as ministers who were highly qualified.⁵⁴

Test and assignment of posts :

In order to find out their real abilities and suitabilities to the posts, the king should test their merits. Though the epic refers to the testing of ministers by means of Upadhās⁵⁵ but it does not enumerate them.

Kauṭilya refers to four types of Upadhās, such as Dharma Artha, Kāma and Bhayopadhās, and advises the king to appoint those persons as ministers who are successful in those tests.⁵⁶ At one place, the epic informs that the premier should not be influenced by Kāma, Bhaya, Lobha and Krodha.⁵⁷ These may be compared with the Upadhās as mentioned by Kauṭilya. Bhaya and Kāma are common to both. Lobha as mentioned in the epic is the same as Kāma in the Arthaśāstra as both are used in the sense of desire and gaining something. Krodha as referred to in the epic may be compared with Dharma as used as a type of Upadhā in the Arthaśāstra. But, how can the former be compared with the latter? Dharmopadhā in the Arthaśāstra stands

51. Udyoga. 26.12.

52. Virāṭa. 64. 25-26.

53. Ādi. 4.5-7.

54. Altekar, A.S., SGAI., Pp. 178-181.

55. Udyoga. 5.33., ŚP. 84.20.49., 112.23-24., Āśrama. 9.14.

56. K.A. 1.9.

57. ŚP. 81.26-27.

for the dismissal or degradation of Purohita resulting in his anger (Krodha) to disunite the officers from the king in order to test their anger in sympathy with him (Purohita).⁵⁸ Thus, Krodha as referred to in the epic may be compared with Dharmopadhā in the Arthaśāstra.

How these Upadhās or allurements are to be applied in order to test the ministers? The epic does not mention this matter, but Kauṭilya enlightens us that the king being assisted with his Purohita should offer temptations by means of religious, monetary, fear and love allurements to the persons, and jobs, suitable to their ability and taking account of their proved strength and weakness, should be assigned to them.⁵⁹ But who are to be appointed on different posts and what should be the testing criteria? Regarding this, the epic does not furnish information, but the Arthaśāstra helps us in this respect that of these tried persons, whose characters have been tested under religious, monetary, love and fear allurements, should be appointed in civil and criminal courts, works of the revenue collection, affairs of the harem, and in security affairs of the king respectively.⁶⁰ Numerous references to the Upadhās in the epic indicate the same thing. The Rāmāyaṇa also refers to the appointment of Amātyas who are successful in tests.⁶¹

What were the leading principles to be followed in appointing the ministers. The posts should be assigned to ministers according to their suitability and efficiency,⁶² and these things should be decided by testing their abilities. Besides this, it informs that on one post, only one person should be appointed, otherwise, many evils would come into existence due to clash

58. K.A. 1.9.

59. Ibid. 1.9.

60. Ibid. 1.0.

61. V.R., Ayodhyā, 100.26.

62. ŚP. 81.30.

among so many persons appointed on the same post at the same time.⁶³

Organisation of the council of ministers :

The ministers constituted their council and worked under the leadership of the premier. The epic refers to some technical terms for their council such as the Amātya-Parishad⁶⁴ in which king Somaka has been referred to as consulting his ministers. The term Parishad in this sense, has been used by Kautīlya and Aśoka⁶⁵ also. The term Amātyasamiti⁶⁶ is similar to the former term and has been referred to in connection with the story of king Janaka. The most popular term Mantrimaṇḍala⁶⁷ also has been used as king Dhṛitarāshṭra advises Yudhisṭhira to sit in it and acquaint his ministers with the consequence of leakage of the Mantra. In other works also, these terms have been used to denote the council of ministers.

The thinkers of the Mahābhārata are in favour of a small ministry consisting of either 3 or 5 or 8 ministers.⁶⁸ The council of eight ministers includes persons of different castes such as 4 of them being the Brāhmaṇas, three Śūdras and remaining one being the Sūta.⁶⁹ Inclusion of three sūdras in ministry is a landmark in the history of the Hindu political thought. In this list, the Kshatriyas are completely eliminated. This list of ministers is against the principal of the epic, as it gives more emphasis on the high birth of persons to be appointed as ministers. It seems that in actual practice the Śūdras were

63. ŚP. 81.25.

64. Āraṇyaka. 127.8.

65. K.A. 1.9, Rock Edict 3rd & 6th.

66. ŚP, 308.139.

67. Āśrama. 9.25.

68. ŚP. 84.44., 84.20., 86. 7-10 respectively.

69. Ibid. 86.7-10.

not appointed as ministers, and the field was dominated by the Brāhmaṇas and Kshatriyas. But, the above mentioned list reveals the liberal view of society towards the Śūdras.

Though, there were either three or five ministers, but generally eight ministers were appointed. Manu refers to the number of ministers either 7 or 8, but the Mānava school as cited by Kautīlya is in favour of 12 ministers,⁷¹ and according to the Rāmāyaṇa there should be 8 ministers.⁷²

Generally, the ministry's strength was based on the scope of state's activities, but usually 8 ministers may be supposed as consisting the council of ministers. If we accept this number, then a question arises as to what were the different portfolios allotted to these ministers. The epic does not refer to this matter, and so for this, we have to depend on other works. Śukranītisāra, though a very late work, mentions the portfolios held by 8 ministers.⁷³ Those are Sumantra (finance minister), Paṇḍita-Amātya (law), Paṇḍita (home), Pradhāna (premier), Sachiva (war), Amātya (revenue), Prāḍavivāk (justice), and Pratinidhi (king's representative).

In the council, there was a premier known as the Pradhānāmātya or Mantrimukhya,⁷⁴ because he was the main figure in it. Parīkshita, a king of Ikṣhvāku dynasty, had good relations with his Pradhānāmātya.⁷⁵ The affairs of war and peace were important, and so, this Dept. was under the charge of a minister who has been designated as the Sāndhivigrahika,⁷⁶ a technical term which finds place in many inscriptions also. The foreign affairs also were important, hence we see Yudhishṭhira appointing Vidura as the minister-

70. Manu. 7.54.

71. K.A. 1.14.

72. V.R., Bālakāṇḍa, 7.2.

73. Śukra. 2.71-72.

74. Āraṇyaka. 190. 21., Sabbā, 51.20 respectively.

75. Āraṇyaka. 190. 21.

76. ŚP. 85.29-30.

in-charge of Shādgūnya.⁷⁷ In the matters of state's affairs, Purohita was an influential person and his necessity for king is discussed many times. So, he also was a member of the council. The economic affairs of state were many, so there was a minister to look after them, and was known as the Arthachintaka or Arthayuktā-mātya. The state had concern with the sources of income and items of expenditure, so this department was under the charge of a finance minister. Sañjaya has been referred to as the minister-in-charge of Āyavyaya-chintana⁷⁸ during the reign of Yudhishtira. The military affairs were looked after by a separate minister and under him, there were many other officers to manage these affairs. The Senāpati was the defence minister, and the head of the striking command. Yudhishtira had appointed Arjuna as the minister in-charge of the striking command in order to crush the foes.⁷⁹ The Sūta has been referred to as a—minister, but his duties were multifarious. He was the minister-in-charge of chariots, but was a minister for giving counsels also, as we see Dhṛitarāshtra consulting his Sūta, Sañjaya on the matters of state's affairs.⁸⁰ It seems that the crown prince also was a minister who represented the king in his absence. So, in this way, it may be assumed that the 8 ministers were the Mantrimukhya, Sāndhivigra-hika, Purohita, Arthayuktamātya, Āya-vyayachintaka, Senā-pati, Sūta and Yuvarāja. It is only a hypothesis, but on the basis of other works, it appears to be near the truth. (709b)

Besides these ministers, the epic refers to 18 Tirthas⁸¹ who were the high functionaries of state, but their posts are not mentioned. The Rāmāyana also refers to them. The

77. ŚP. 41.9.

78. Ibid. 41.10.

79. Ibid. 41.11.

80. Āraṇyaka. 46.2-3., 48.1.

81. Sabhā. 5.27.

82. VR. Ayodhya. 100.36.

Arthaśāstra⁸³ of Kauṭilya contains the list of 18 Tirthas such as the Mantrin, Purohita, Senāpati, Yuvarāja, Dauvārika (the Lord Mayor of palace), Antaravainśika (lord chamberlain), Praśāstr (the officer-in-charge of jails), Samāhartā (Revenue officer), Sannideṣṭā (Treasurer), Pradeshtā, Nāyaka (Generalissimo), Paura (the Lord Mayor), Vyavahārika (Chief justice), Karmāntika (Minister for industry), Mantri-Parishad-Adhyaksha (the Premier), Dandapāla (the officer-in charge of peace and order), Durgapāla (Officer-in-charge of the fort), and Antapāla (Officer-in-charge of frontiers). A comparative study of the list of 8 ministers in the epic and 18 Tirthas in the Arthaśāstra shows that 8 ministers are included in the list of 18 Tirthas.. It seems that there were eight prominent ministers, and other ten were of inferior status.

Functions and duties of ministers

Besides discharging their own departmental duties, ministers had to do some other functions of general nature. Their most essential duty was to advise the king in such a way, so that the objectives might be achieved. While advising him they had to know that good advice is the root of state. They formulated the state's policies and advised him to act accordingly.

The king alone cannot execute the state's policies as the affairs are multifarious. Hence, the ministers assisted him in executing those policies. The eight ministers with a large number of subordinate officers looked after the affairs of state.⁸⁴

The miniter's duty is to have a check on the king's autocracy, because he may misuse his power, commit many objectionable deeds in his private and public life. Ministers of

83. K.A. 1.11.

84. Vide this chapter, pp. 201-203.

king Nala⁸⁵ requested him not to play dice as it was the source of untold sufferings, but the unfortunate king did not give his ears to their words. Vidura, the minister of the Kauravas, had advised them many times to follow the just path by offering their due share to the Pāṇḍavas. It was not necessary for the king to accept their advice, but the epic instructs him to follow it, provided it is good.

The protection of state depends on ministers, and in time of external invasions and internal disturbances, they had to protect the state with the help of armed forces. Duryodhan has been referred to as having invaded the Trigartas in company with his ministers.⁸⁶ Jayadratha consulted his ministers on the battle field of the Kurukshetra,⁸⁷ and Vṛishavarmā, the Sachiva of Dhṛitarāstra, was killed on battle-field of Kurukshetra.⁸⁸ At one place, the epic mentions that the king engages his ministers in the affairs of the formulation of Mantra and fighting battles.⁸⁹ There are many historical illustrations to prove the practical aspect of this matter.

The ministers were the trustees of state, and in case of the king's sudden death protected the prince, managed for his education, and coronated him as the king. After the sudden death of king Parikshita, his ministers enthroned his infant son Janamejaya, managed for his adequate education and looked after the state's⁹⁰ affairs. The epic does not approve the dictum of Bhārdvāja, a predecessor of Kauṭilya, that after the king's sudden death, the minister should fish in the troubled waters by killing the prince and enthroning himself as the king.⁹¹ Loyalty was considered as an impor-

85. Āraṇyaka, 56.11.

86. Virāta, 43.1.

87. Droṇa, 53.9-12

88. Karna, 3.34.

89. ŚP. 92.28.

90. Ādi, 40.5-9.

91. K.A. 5.6.

tant virtue in a minister, and it was expected from him to serve the state with high sense of loyalty to the king. The ministers of king Nala during his exile, protected his son and daughter by sending them to their maternal grandfather.⁹²

During the king's absence, they had to carry on the administrative affairs. Some times, kings went outside the state for performing penance in forests, entrusting the state under the charge of competent ministers, as kings Bhagīratha⁹³ and Yuvanāśva⁹⁴ had done so. Parikshita,⁹⁵ on the occassion of his going on hunting expedition, had entrusted all the state's affairs to his ministers. King Saṃbarāṇa⁹⁶ had requested his ministers to look after his state during his absence. During the king's ailing period, ministers were required to look after the state's affairs. Such a state, under the charge of a minister for a long time, was known as the Amātyasaṁstha, and virtually he ruled as a king. Mahākṛṇi, the minister of Ambuvich, the king of Magadha, was such a minister.⁹⁷ Manu also advises the ailing king to make the ministers in-charge of the state's affairs.⁹⁸

Procedure of working

A few scanty references throw considerable light on this matter. The king presided over the meetings of council, as we see kings Janaka⁹⁹ and Somaka¹⁰⁰ doing so, and Dhritarāshṭra¹⁰¹ has been shown as advising Yudhīshthira to sit

92. Āraṇyaka, 57.19-20.

93. Ibid. 107.3.

94. Ibid. 126. 5-7.

95. Ādi. 44.19-21.

96. Ibid. 163.12.

97. Ibid. 196.17-21.

98. Manu. 7.226.

99. ŚP. 308.139.

100. Āraṇyaka. 127.8.

101. Āīrama. 9.25.

in the council of ministers. In the absence of king, perhaps, the premier presided over the meeting.

What were the matters of discussions, and how did the ministers and king think over them? The king placed agenda before his ministers, and opened discussions, as it has been well illustrated through the procedure of working of the Kaurava-ministry. In the council, Duryodhana asked his ministers to think over the matters which could cause prosperity to him, enquired about the works which were not complete, and the means and methods for performing the works well.¹⁰² This shows that the previous agenda was reviewed, new matters were discussed, and policies were formulated for achieving the objectives.

But how were the matters discussed and finalised? The king placed agenda before the ministers which they discussed. If there was no objection, then the proposal was approved otherwise the view of the majority was accepted.

These ministers do not like to express their inner views to the king before so many persons, and so, he should take their advice individually and privately.¹⁰³ The Rāmāyaṇa and Manu also are in favour of either group discussions or individual consultation as the case may be suitable to the king¹⁰⁴

It is possible that the ministers may not express their views for fear of the king; but it is a defect in them. The epic instructs them to express expert opinion fearlessly.¹⁰⁵ But side by side they should not support the views advanced by wicked ministers, and on such occasions, should leave the meeting; otherwise by supporting their views, they cause destruction to the state.¹⁰⁶ In order to remove all

102. Āraṇyaka. 241.13-14,

103. ŚP. 112.26-27.

104. Ayodhyā. 100.71., Manu. 7.57.

105. Ādi. 196.1.

106. Udyoga. 37.27.

such happenings, the epic instructs them to work in a team spirit.¹⁰⁷

Some technical terms regarding the procedure of working help us in acquainting ourselves with the process of the formulation and adoption of Mantra. After discussing the matters, the king expressed his own view¹⁰⁸ to the ministers, who finding it correct approved¹⁰⁹ for final adoption. These things are apparent from the working of the council of ministers under Janamejaya. The finalisation of Mantra was known as Mantranis̥chaya.¹¹⁰ The whole period of consultation and discussion for it has been termed as Mantrakāla.¹¹¹ It was divided into two sittings. In the first sitting (Pūrvakāla), the king discussed the matters with his ministers, and in the second one (Uttarakāla)¹¹², he informed his Guru of the views expressed by his ministers, and on being approved by him, placed them in the council, which finally approved by it.¹¹³ The Mantramārga¹¹⁴ should be followed by the king, which has been approved by the persons expert in the affairs of the formulation of policy,¹¹⁵ as it makes the subjects loyal to him.

Are the policies approved only by the ministers and Guru to be followed without the people's consent? The epic advances a revolutionary idea when it instructs the king to inform the people about the policy of state¹¹⁶ through his officers, if those are not to be kept secret. This shows the respect of popular will by the state. It is not only a theoretical matter; but during the compositional period of

107. ŚP. 81.31.

108. Ādi. 46.35-37.

109. Ibid. 47.1.

110. Ibid. 46.25-31.

111. Āraṇyaka. 110.28.

112. Droṇa. 53.12.

113. ŚP. 84.50.

114. Ibid. 84.50-51.

115. Ibid. 84.52.

116. Ibid. 86.11.

the epic was brought into practice as well. The 3rd R.E. of Aśoka reveals that the council's orders were to be duly recorded and expounded to the public by local officers.

Mantragupti

Three things ensure the safety and prosperity of state, namely the spies, treasury and Mantra, but among these also the last one is more important, Hence, it has been suggested that the king should preserve its secrecy.¹¹⁷ It is the root of victory and the means for success; but only a competent king, having control over his senses, and being assisted by good ministers may preserve it.¹¹⁸ It should be his utmost attempt to preserve its secrecy as in the views of Vidura, poison and weapon, when given and hurled, kill only one respectively; but due to the leakage of Mantra, (Mantra-visrava) the king with his whole Rāshṭra¹¹⁹ is destroyed. So it must not be disclosed at an inappropriate time, because, due to this a large number of dangers come into existence. Dhṛitarāshṭra, in his political discourse to Yudhisṭhira, enumerates many dangers and faults originating from the disclosure of Mantra.¹²⁰

How is the Mantra disclosed out, and how is it to be preserved? The king is surrounded with many persons, and there is possibility of its disclosure, so the epic instructs him to be very cautious in preserving its secrecy from external and internal persons.¹²¹ Bhāradvāja opines that Mantra should be preserved carefully so that other persons may not know it prior to its execution.¹²² Vidura also has expressed similar

117. ŚP. 87.20.

118. Sabhā. 5.17., Āraṇyaka. 149.43 Udyoga. 38.19., ŚP. 113.19.

119. Udyoga. 33.34.

120. Āśrama. 9.24-25.

121. Udyoga. 38.15.

122. K.A. 1.14.

view.¹²³ The king should not say anything about his secret policies to those persons who are not his friends and well-wishers, if friends, are unwise, and if wise have not controlled their senses. Those persons disclose the secrecy, who have not controlled their senses ;¹²⁴ so Kauṭilya also gives emphasis on controlling the senses for that purpose.¹²⁵ The king should conceal and preserve his feelings, ideas and motives like the limbs of a tortoise for preserving the Mantra's secrecy.¹²⁶

Kauṭilya has expressed similar view for that purpose.¹²⁷ It has been suggested that as a peacock in the winter season keeps mum, and never expresses its inner feeling in that season, but it does only in the rainy season, likewise, the king also should preserve his ideas relating to the matters of vital importance of state, and should disclose only at appropriate time.¹²⁸ For all these reasons, the epic considers the Mantra-gupti¹²⁹ as one of the 36 virtues which cause prosperity to the state, but its disclosure has been regarded as one of the 14 Rājadoshas¹³⁰ (King's boulds).

Is it possible for the king alone to preserve the secrecy of Mantra ? The ministers assist him in formulating, it so virtually they also play important role in this matter. The wise ministers conceal the Mantra, do not inform the foe of the weaknesses of their master and regard the Mantra as the armour for his protection.¹³¹ The ministers seek state's services for their livelihood ; so the king should be always cautious from them.¹³² Mantrachintā (consultations) causes

123. Udyoga. 38.16.

124. Ibid. 38.18.

125. K.A. 1.14.

126. ŚP. 84.45-47.

127. K.A. 1.14.

128. ŚP. 120.7.

129. Ibid. 71.1-12.

130. Sabhā. 5.96-98.

131. ŚP. 84.45-47.

132. Ibid. 84.48-49.

prosperity to the state provided its secrecy is well preserved. Sometime the enemy, by bribing the ministers, disassociates them from him, and tries to know his policy so, he in order to guard against this, should be always alert from such ministers.¹³³

What steps are to be taken for preserving the secrecy of Mantra so that the ministers may not disclose it out? Viśālāksha has expressed the view that those ministers should be consulted who are very intelligent and experienced.¹³⁴ The epic also instructs that those ministers should not be consulted who are not wise, make haste or delay in performing deeds, and praise the king uselessly in order to please him.¹³⁵ Those ministers should be consulted whose valour has been seen in actual practice, have gained fame, honour their words, respect the worthy persons, do not discard the right path, have no fear, anger, greed, have controlled their senses and are well tested.¹³⁶ Further, those ministers should be consulted who are intelligent, the sons of the soil, well studied, are the king's well wishers, brave but humble and sweet, satisfied, trusted by others, and are experts in Dandaniti.¹³⁷

Side by side, the epic furnishes details regarding the characteristics of ministers, who are not worthy to be consulted. It has been remarked that counsel of vital importance (Paramam Mantram) can neither be made known to one who is not a friend, nor to a friend, who is not an expert, nor even to an expert if he is not of mastermind.¹³⁸ The fickle-minded persons, minors, and greedy persons must never be consulted, because such ones disclose the Mantra's secrecy to others.¹³⁹ Even a loyal and learned minister is also not worth consulting

133. Sabhā. 5.14.

134. K.A. 1.14.

135. Udyoga. 38.58., Āranyaka. 149. 38, 45.

136. ŚP. 84.11-13.

137. Ibid. 84.30-32, 38-43.

138. Ibid. 82.3.

139. Āranyaka. 149.44.

if he is a new member of the council.¹⁴¹ The king should not consult a minister who has been expelled by him, and even his son appointed on his place should not be consulted.¹⁴²

The number of persons to be consulted also, ensures the preservation of the Mantra's secrecy. There is an easy possibility of its leakage if it is formulated in the presence of many persons. The epic refers to the difficulty in the republican states, wherein Mantragupti is a difficult problem on account of large number of members of the Gaṇasabhā who are equal in socio-political status.¹⁴³ So, it advances the view that this subject in republican states should be under the charge of a few chiefs. All members are not fit to take part in matters relating to the formulation of policy.¹⁴⁴ For this purpose, in the monarchical state, it asserts that the king alone, if possible, should formulate the policy, as some-times ministers reveal it to the enemy.¹⁴⁵ This view finds place in the Arthaśāstra of Kautilya. Bhārdvāja¹⁴⁶ also is in favour of Mantrachintā by the king alone, on the same ground which has been advanced by the epic. It has presented a contradictory statement regarding this, as it itself asserts that the king should never formulate the state's policy alone, but with the assistance of his ministers.

The principle of Ekachintanam; i.e. formulation of state's policy by one person only has been vehemently criticised by the thinkers of the Mahābhārata. Due to this, even a well established and strong state is exterminated.¹⁴⁷ This view is similar to the one advanced by Viśālāksha,¹⁴⁸

141. Ibid. 84.36.

142. Ibid. 84.37.

143. Ibid. 108.8, 14, 24.

144. Ibid. 108.8, 14, 24.

145. Ibid. 104.25.

146. K.A., 1.14.

147. Sabhā. 5.96-98.

148. K.A., 1.14.

who, while criticising the view of Bhāradvāja, has said that the formulation of policy by the king alone does not ensure the achievement of the goal, because a person is unable to decide alone as to what is right or wrong ; so he should consult wise and experienced ministers.

How many ministers should be consulted in order to preserve the secrecy of Mantra ? Kautilya¹⁴⁹ is in favour of consultation with either 3 or 4 ministers because consultation with a single minister may not lead to any definite conclusion in case of complicated issues. A single minister proceeds wilfully, and without restraint. In deliberating with two, the king may be overpowered by their combined action or imperilled by their mutual dissension, but with three or four ministers he will not come to any serious grief but will arrive at satisfactory results. With ministers more than four in number, he will have to come to a decision after a good deal of trouble, nor will secrecy of council be maintained without much trouble. The epic¹⁵⁰ at one place refers that atleast three ministers be consulted. Perhaps, it has in its view the same ideas as advanced by the Arthaśāstra in referring to this number. Nārada¹⁵¹ questions Yudhisṭhira whether he formulated the state's policy alone by himself or in consultation with ministers, because in the former case, there is no possibility of the formulation of good policy, and in latter, there is chance of its leakage ; so the number of consulting ministers should not be one or in great numbers. The Rāmāyaṇa¹⁵² also refers to the number suggesting thereby that either 3 or 4 ministers should be consulted by the king. So, all the authorities are in favour of consultation with either 3 or 4 ministers for the formulation of policy in order to preserve its secrecy.

149. Ibid. 1.14.

150. ŚP. 84.50-51.

151. Sabhā, 5.10 ; V. R. Ayodhyā, 100.18.

152. V. R. Ayodhyā. 100.71.

In order to preserve the secrecy of the Mantra, it is also necessary to make consultation at such place, and in such a time that other persons may not know of it. Vidura suggests that the matters of the counsel should be formulated on the top of the mountain, in the palace, and inside the forest.¹⁵³ Manu also refers to these places where consultations are to be made.¹⁵⁴ Dhritarāshtra also, while delivering his sermon on political subjects, recommends the same places suitable for consulting the ministers but these places should be well guarded and well surrounded. Regarding the appropriate time of consultation he says that it should not be made at night.¹⁵⁵ The monkeys, birds, fools and lame persons should not be allowed to enter the place of consultation in order to guard against the leakage of Mantra.¹⁵⁶ Though the epic refers to these places where consultation should be made, but practically speaking, kings did not go to the forests, and on mountain-tops to deliberate over the matters of state's counsel. The main thing is that the place of consultation should be well guarded, so that the Mantra may not be disclosed to others. Kautilya¹⁵⁷ also gives emphasis on the measures to be taken for the preservation of Mantra. He does not refer to the particular places as mentioned by the epic, but says that even the birds and dogs should not be allowed to remain at the place of consultation, and death penalty should be inflicted on those who try to disclose the Mantra's secrecy to others. The epic again, in order to guard against the leakage of Mantra, informs us that the Mantragriha must be well guarded and dwarfs, lame, blind, dumb, impotent persons, and women must not be allowed to remain inside that house, because such persons in disguise of these forms, come to find out the

153. Udyoga. 38.17.

154. Manu. 7.147.

155. Āśrama. 9.22.

156. Ibid. 9.23.

157. K.A., 1.14.

secrecy of Mantra for the king's enemy.¹⁵⁸ So it instructs the king to formulate his policy at a well guarded, beautiful, clean and lovely place in order to preserve its secrecy.¹⁵⁹

It is minister's duty to give advice to the king, and the latter has to consult the former on matters of the state's affairs. Is he bound to follow the advice of ministers or can they force him to follow their advice? The epic asserts that the king should follow their advice for the prosperity of state. King Janaka had no freedom in his Amātyasamiti¹⁶⁰; hence this statement shows that the kings had to bow down to the views of the ministers. Generally, the king followed the advice of ministers and it has been regarded as a characteristic of the good king. Only the wicked kings do not follow the advice of ministers, and lead the state to the path of destruction.¹⁶¹ Vidura thinks that as a diseased man dislikes food, as a wicked women even in the house of a Śrottriya cannot be brought on the right path by good advice, and as a young women dislikes her old husband, so the bad kings do not like the good advice by their ministers.¹⁶² These references show that the king is not bound constitutionally to follow the advice of ministers. According to the thinkers of the epic, the king should accept the minister's advice only after examining it carefully.¹⁶³ The ministers cannot impose their views on him as in this case, there is possibility of dangers of their life from the side of king.¹⁶⁴ There are many instances of the non-acceptance of the advice of ministers by the kings. Dhṛitarāshṭra had refused Vidura's advice for offering due share of the Pāṇḍavas.¹⁶⁵ King

158. ŚP. 84.53.

159. Ibid. 84.54.

160. Ibid. 308.139.

161. Araṇyaka. 6.16.

162. Ibid. 6.15.

163. Anuśāsana, 36.8.

164. ŚP. 94.24.

165. Udyoga. 26.12.

Nala also did not follow the advice of his ministers.¹⁶⁶ But, due to the non-acceptance of good advice, those kings suffered much. Sometimes, the king followed bad advice given by their ministers, as we see Duryodhan always following the bad advices given by Śakunī. He was a wicked king, and hence did not hesitate to follow the bad advices of his ministers. The Rāmāyaṇa¹⁶⁷ also has advanced the similar view that the king should follow only the good advice given by the wise and good ministers.

The nature of relationship of ministers with the king is the cause of the state's prosperity and decline. The king is the final authority to appoint, promote, degrade, dismiss or expell them, so their fate depends on his sweet will. They are responsible to him, and not to any one else. The wicked and powerful kings did not follow the advice of ministers, and sometimes dismissed them. Vidura¹⁶⁸ was expelled by Dhṛitarāshṭra on account of having been advised by him to return due share to the Pāṇḍavas. All ministers are not good, as some of them accept bribes¹⁶⁹ and steal away the state's property.¹⁷⁰ The epic instructs the king to set spies after them in order to have control over them.¹⁷¹

But, the other side of the picture also is worth seeing. When kings were weak and ministers ambitious and powerful, the latter exerted more influence on the former ones and equalled themselves with them. Mahākarni, a minister of king Ambuvicha of Magadha, was such a minister, who on account of the king's prolonged illness, had become virtually the king, and insulted his lord.¹⁷² Such a type of administration was known as Amātyasaṁstha. Sometimes, the

166. Aranyaka. Ch. 56.

167. Yuddhakāṇḍa. 63.13-15.

168. Aranyaka. 6.17-18.

169. Udyoga. 23.18.

170. ŚP. 83.3-4.

171. Ibid. 69.9.

172. Adi. 196.17-22.

ministers killed their own masters as the enemy of king Dyumatsena was killed by his own minister.¹⁷³

A perusal of the epic shows that these were exceptional cases, and generally there existed good relationship between the kings and the ministers. It has been asserted that as the Brāhmaṇa knows the Brāhmaṇa and a husband knows his wife, so the king knows his minister.¹⁷⁴ It is the king's duty to respect the loyal, wise, dutiful and efficient ministers. The nature of relationship may be assumed from this fact that he has been advised to trust his ministers like his father, and they should know even the most secret Mantra of the state.¹⁷⁵ The kings always searched for good ministers and repented for their ill-behaviour to them. Dhṛitarāshṭra requested Sañjaya to bring back Vidura who was dismissed and expelled by him.¹⁷⁶ The ministers also served the king with the high sense of loyalty.

173. Aranyaka. 283.3-4.

174. Udyoga. 38.25.

175. ŚP. 81.24.

176. Aranyaka. 7.1-8.

Chapter VIII

CIVIL SERVICE

During the compositional period of the Mahābhārata the scope of state's activities became wide, so, naturally it necessitated the growth of civil service. The king has to provide people with the means which cause prosperity to them, but, it is impossible for him to do so alone, so, he has to organise a very efficient civil service for carrying out multifarious affairs of state.¹ As regards indispensability of civil servants for assisting him in administrative matters, the epic contains many references. It mentions that the person born in noble and high families aspire for kingship and struggle for its attainment, so, the king needs a band of loyal persons to protect himself, and his state from the enemies.² Besides this, he should not be satisfied with what he has achieved, it should be his endeavour to obtain the unobtained and to protect the obtained things, but this also cannot be performed by him alone, so for that purpose also, the civil servants are essential.³

For civil servants, different terms have been mentioned in the epic such as Bhṛitya⁴ or those persons who are supported by him in lieu of their services which they render to him. The more appropriate term is the Rājabhṛitya⁵ or the state's servants. The term Sahāyavān⁶ also has been used for civil servants, which actually means an assistant. The epic contains an interesting technical term the Rājayukta,⁷ which means persons

1. Udyoga. 37.22 ; ŚP. 94.24-26.

2. ŚP. 116.12.

3. Ibid. 116.13.

4. Udyoga. 37.20-24.

5. Ibid. 37.28.

6. Ibid. 37.22.

7. ŚP. 83.9-10, 15.

or servants attached to the king. The Arthaśāstra⁸ also refers to these officers as subordinate secretariate staff accompanying the higher officials on tours. They were employed for the collection of revenue.⁹ The Mahābhārata does not refer to their particular duties, and regards them as state's officials in general. The existence of these officers is proved by the epigraphic evidences also. The Aśoka's R.E. III refers to the officers known as the 'Yuktas' whose functions are mentioned as going out on tours at the interval of every five years as well as for other business such as for the propagation of morality. It seems that the term 'Yukta' is the short form of 'Rajayukta'. The Gupta inscriptions also contain names of such category of officers namely the 'Āyuktaka' and 'Vinīyuktaka'. Besides these, there are some other terms which have been used for the state's officials such as Rajopasevin¹⁰ or those who serve the state, and Rajopajivin¹¹ or those who support themselves by rendering their services to the state. Kauṭilya also refers to the term 'Rajopajivin'¹² for them. The most appropriate term for the state's civil servants is the 'Rājapurusha'¹³, the persons attached to the state. This term in its shorter form 'Purusha' has been used in the pillar edicts (1, 4, and 6th) of Aśoka and is applied to the Govt. servants of all ranks. Thus, the epic refers to many technical terms for the state's servants, and their existence in actual practice is proved by other literary and epigraphic evidences, which were written and inscribed respectively during the compositional period of the epic.

Regarding the types and grades of civil servants, the epic furnishes many information. Generally, there are two classes of civil servants namely the Paripāṛśvika and Vahiśchara.¹⁴

8. K.A. 2.5.

9. Ibid. 2.9.

10. ŚP. 83.24.

11. Ibid. 83.26.

12. K.A. 5.4.

13. ŚP. 92.23.

14. Ibid. 119.9-10.

The former category of civil servants includes all those civil servants who serve the king, remaining in the capital city, are more attached to him, and belong to his personal staff such as personal attendants, body-guard, ministers, private secretaries and so on. Another group of civil servants consists of those who are posted outside the capital city and are not in direct touch with the king. Such as the clerks in different departments, soldiers, spies and others.

Further, the Mahābhārata classifies the civil servants on the basis of their ability such as Mukhya or Uttam, Madhyama and Adhama.¹⁵ The first category includes those who are the most competent and of the highest importance. The Madhyama and Adhama categories of civil servants include those officials who are of middle and lower qualities, and are appointed to the posts of middle and lower importance.

Regarding the basis of recruitment, it has been asserted that merit alone should be the fundamental criteria and the epic lays down necessary qualifications for the officers. Regarding their general qualifications and requisites it informs that such persons should know the laws followed by the Kulas, and should be acquainted with the nature of people, should speak the truth, should be of good character, should be honest and keep patience, should be well educated, should have control over their minds, and should follow the right path.¹⁶ Further, it asserts that such persons should not be recruited to the state's service who are greedy, thieves, have enmity with the king and are minors.¹⁷ The persons to be recruited should be always industrious, experts in military science and skilled in cavalry.¹⁸ Foolish, fickle minded, and persons of low birth should not be recruited to the state's service.¹⁹

15. Sabhā. 5.32, 64.

16. ŚP. 121.26-27.

17. Sabhā. 6.65.

18. ŚP. 120.17.

19. Ibid. 119.8.

The qualifications of Paripāśvika and Vahiśchara servants have been discussed well. The persons to be recruited to the former category of officers should be good, belong to noble families, should be brave, wise, pious, skilful and should not be fickle minded.²⁰ In this category, the king must not recruit such persons who are fools, poor and not humble.²¹ The Vahiśchara servants should be humble, active, dutiful, should have patience, should be clever, should have good qualifications, and should not be dissatisfied with their posts.²² The epic gives emphasis on the qualifications of civil servants to be recruited, because the people's prosperity and well being of kings are dependent upon them as they perform different deeds for their prosperity. The prosperity of the kingdom diminishes when he recruits such persons to the posts of high importance, who are unwise, greedy, motivated by sexual desire, have not the purity of ideas, are violent, dull, unacquainted with the Śāstras, have no enthusiasm, drink wine, play dice, indulge in sexual engagements, and like to go on pleasure tours.²³ Hence, it is always good for him to recruit competent persons to the state's services, because, even a competent and powerful king cannot enjoy the fruits of great deeds of courage, if he is assisted by fearful and incompetent civil servants. So, he should appoint such persons who are skilful in performing the master's works efficiently and sharply like the arrows.²⁴

In the Kauṭilya's²⁵ Arthaśāstra also, similar qualifications have been laid down for the officials of the state. Though its approach is different from that of the epic, yet there are similarities in both the works regarding the basis of recruitment. Kauṭilya also gives emphasis on birth, health, educational and technical efficiency, intelligence, memory,

20. Ibid. 119.9.

21. Ibid. 119.11-12.

22. Ibid. 119.10.

23. Ibid. 94.16-17.

24. Ibid. 119.5.

25. K.A., 1.7-3.

steadfastness, nobility of character and practical wisdom of the persons to be recruited to the state's services. Besides, the theorists of the epic recommend the appointment of competent foreigners to the services of the state. Aśoka had appointed Tushāspa a Pahlava as the Governor of Saurāshṭra.

After recruiting the officers, the next task is to assign them different departments, taking into consideration their ability and competence. Some stories reveal the fact that the person seeking state-service, went to the king, and the latter, after being fully satisfied with their abilities, appointed them on suitable posts. This is apparent from the story of Yudhisṭhira, Bhīma, Sahadeo and Nakula seeking jobs from king Virāṭa.²⁶ Probation period also was there, and person were appointed on suitable posts who showed their capability and efficiency to be recruited to the respective posts.²⁷ The persons recruited to the state-service had to undergo many tests, and the successful ones were finally appointed. The epic asserts that the king should well examine, and test the recruited persons, such as their truthfulness, purity, nobility, nature, learning, conduct, family background, valour, kindness and other things, and then he should appoint them on deserving posts,²⁸ otherwise bad servants destroy the state.²⁹ The Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra lays down four methods in order to test the civil servants,³⁰ but such a systematic method of testing is not described in the epic. According to both, the civil servants should be appointed to deserving posts. Incapable and low persons should not be appointed on high posts, because they are not respected on account of their not being sincere to the c

26. Virāṭa. Chapters 6-11.

27. Aśrama. 10.10-12.

28. ŚP. 118.1-3.

29. Ibid. 117.1-44.

30. K.A., 1.6.

duty, hence they are untrustworthy.³¹ The Mahābhārata informs us that no one should be appointed on the post which is beyond his ability. The king gains good results, if he assigns suitable posts to deserving candidates according to their abilities, capacity and merit.³² He should appoint trustworthy persons on the posts relating to the affairs of mines, toll taxes, waterways taxes and the elephant-affairs,³³ because these are the sources of income to the state. Greedy and unwise persons must not be appointed to the posts concerning the economic affairs because such persons harass the subjects³⁴ by exploiting them, and behave in crude ways, hence the persons having many virtues to please the king, and always alert to their respective duties, should be appointed on those posts.³⁵ Merit should be the main consideration and the principal criteria for assigning the posts to the recruited persons. They should be appointed on the posts which they deserve, as the best, the middle and the low qualities of civil servants should be appointed to the best, middle and lower posts respectively.³⁶ The Rāmāyaṇa also instructs the king that the posts should be assigned to persons according to their merits, abilities and competence.³⁷ The epic informs us that the king cannot please his subjects by appointing the civil servants without following the aforesaid principles of recruitment.³⁸ So, on account of this, he should appoint those persons who are very competent and deserve appointments to the respective posts.³⁹ Besides advocating the cause of deserving candidates, the epic advances a very useful principle, that only one person should

31. ŚP. 119.2.

32. Ibid. 119.3-5.

33. Ibid. 69.69.28.

34. Ibid. 72.9.

35. Ibid. 94.15.

36. Sabhā. 5.32, 64.

37. VR. Ayodhyā. 100.26.

38. ŚP. 119.7.

39. Ibid. 94.14.

be appointed to one post⁴⁰, otherwise practical difficulties would come into being. The internal evidences show that the principles of assigning the posts were followed by kings and they always gave their attention to the appointment of competent persons to the posts, as is evident from the story of the appointment of the Pāṇḍava brothers to the state's services of king Virāṭa. The epigraphic records of the compositional period of the epic prove the same thing.

Scope of Civil Service

The scope of civil service is very wide, and it includes many aspects of administrative affairs. The state stood for the people's welfare, hence, it had to appoint a large number of officers to look after them for their prosperity. The king had his own personal staff, such as personal attendants, cooks,⁴¹ palace guards⁴² and the superintendent of harem.⁴³ In political and military fields he and his ministers along with the army were very prominent. In social field also the king himself with his agents had to protect the social institutions and had to impart justice to all as sanctioned and formulated by the Śāstras, hence, the Judicial officers, namely the judges of different grades, played important roles in this field. The people's prosperity depends upon economic stability, so, the civil servants employed in economic affairs had to perform their duties efficiently. Religious field also was covered by the civil service, as the king stood for the protection of Dharma, because he has been regarded as the protector of the Vedas and the Vedic traditions. For the promotion of education and culture, the state had to establish and patronise educational institutions and learned persons.

40. Ibid. 81.25.

41. Aśrama. 1.15.

42. Udyoga. 30.26.

43. Aśrama. 29.20.

Service Conditions

The persons seek jobs for getting the means of support, and also for raising their social status. Enthusiasm and loyalty of the civil servants depend upon good terms of service conditions. The epic furnishes numerous references regarding this aspect of civil service. Sometimes, the servants placed some conditions before the king which were to be fulfilled by him as is apparent from the story of Kaṅka, who prior to joining his post, placed two service conditions to king Virāṭa to be fulfilled by him that he would not quarrel or talk uselessly with his subordinates, and no one should retain the bets won by him in gambling.⁴⁴ The latter one assured him to fulfil these service conditions.

In order to create the sense of loyalty and enthusiasm among civil servants, the pay-scale plays a prominent role. The epic instructs the king to offer sufficient salary, and not to accumulate wealth by withholding it because being deprived of their means of livelihood even the loyal ministers discard and act against him.⁴⁵ Kauṭilya also supports this view that offering of sufficient salary to the servants removes anger from them.⁴⁶ So, for giving suitable salary to them the state should manage sufficient resources.⁴⁷ Kauṭilya also has expressed the similar views.⁴⁸

In addition to salary, they should receive special allowances (Bhaktavetanam).⁴⁹ The word 'Bhaktam' stands for provisions. The kings have to offer suitable salary and allowances to the servants who perform their jobs efficiently.⁵⁰ Kauṭilya informs that 'Bhaktam' was different from salary paid to the servants.⁵¹ The epic also instructs the king to

44. Virāṭa. 6.7-12.

45. Udyoga. 37.21.

46. K.A., 5.3.

47. Udyoga. 37.22.

48. K.A. 5.3.

49. Sabhā. 5.39.

50. Ibid. 5.42, 44.

51. K.A. 5.3.

offer higher 'Bhaktam' to those servants who discharge their duties properly.

Further more, it informs us that it must be the king's duty to support the dependents of those servants who sacrifice their life or endanger themselves while performing their duties.⁵² As regards the pay-scales of different officials the Arthaśāstra⁵³ of Kautilya throws considerable light, but the epic is not so particular on this point. The salary of the Rathin was paid in the form of 1000 coins. This was the amount of salary paid to every Rathin in the army of Yudhishthira.⁵⁴ But the particular type of coin is not referred to and simply the amount is enumerated. The Mahābhārata informs that king Rituparna of Ayodhyā had appointed Bāhuka (king Nala) as his Asvādhaksha on the salary of "Śatamśatāḥ" one hundred Śatamānas⁵⁵ per month. Probably, these were gold coins.⁵⁶ Regarding the salary of other civil servants, it does not inform us, but it may be assumed that they also got sufficient salary for their maintenance.

Regarding the mode of payment of salary, it is mentioned that it was given on monthly basis. The Rathins of Yudhishthira got their salary every month.⁵⁷ The principle of the epic that salary should be given regularly and in time, further reveals that it was a usual affair to give salary more than once in a year, because the annual payment was neither convenient nor so useful, hence, it was paid on the monthly basis. Kautilya does not refer to the particular period, so it is difficult to find out his views on this aspect, but scholars have come to the conclusion that according to him, civil servants should receive salary on monthly basis, but the estimate of the amount of salary was made on annual basis. Patañjali also, who belongs to the developing period of the epic, informs

52. Sabhā. 5.42, 44 ; Anuśāsana. 128.50.

53. K.A. 5.3.

54. Sabhā. 54.20.

55. Aranyaka. 64.6.

56. Supra. Ch. 1.

57. Sabhā. 54.20.

that the civil servants got their salary on monthly basis (Bhṛitakamāsa).⁵⁸ So, all these references prove that the civil servants got their salary on monthly basis. Perhaps they got their salary in cash and provision in kind.

The salary should be given on the monthly basis, and the amount should be adequate, but there is possibility of making delay in paying it to the civil servants. This practice is not praiseworthy because the civil servants sometimes become very angry if they do not receive their salary in time, hence the expiry of due date is not good.⁵⁹ Kauṭilya⁶⁰ advises the king to offer salary to the civil servants on due date. The Rāmāyaṇa⁶¹ also advances the same view, because its expiry brings many evils to the state. The epic informs that the army of the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis received adequate salary on due date.⁶²

Besides offering adequate salary in time, the king had to take care for personal safety of civil servants as they are the executors of policies for the people's welfare. King Virāṭa had announced to inflict death penalty on the person, who would cause harm to Kaṅka.⁶³ Protection to the civil servants was essential as all persons were not happy with them, hence they had to face some dangers.

The Mahābhārata furnishes details regarding the characteristics of good and bad civil servants. The former ones are very rare. Generally the persons love the king for the fulfilment of their selfish motives, but good and loyal servants serve him even after sacrificing their own interests and life.⁶⁴ The king enjoys the fruits of his state being assisted by competent servants versed in different branches of arts and sciences.⁶⁵ The good servants are very active, and being

58. Khera, N. N., Public expenditure in ancient India, JIH, Volume XLII, Pt. 3, p. 813.

59. Sabhā. 5.39.

60. K.A. 5.3.

61. VR. Ayodhyā, 75.23, 100, 32-33.

62. Aranyaka. 16.21.

63. Virāṭa. 6.13.

ordered by king, act swiftly and sharply.⁶⁶ The epic presents many illustrations of faithful and efficient servants, who served the king selflessly. The ministers of king Nala⁶⁷ saved his children when he was defeated in gambling losing his state to his cousin. The story of Sage Kālakavṛikshiya reveals many evils which are found among the civil servants. They steal away the property of king, are not always loyal to him, cause distress to him, and endanger the existence of the state.⁶⁸ The epic refers to 'Parasāadhanāḥ' servants who receive salary from their employers and serve the enemies of their lords, but their being helpful to the enemies is not without ground.⁶⁹ They do so on being degraded or insulted, dismissed or dissatisfied, against whom allegations have been alleged, who are punished, are poor, greedy, angry, fearful, proud, cheated and have suffered much at the hands of the king.⁷⁰ The epic while narrating the story of the 'Tiger and Jackal'⁷¹ furnishes interesting information regarding bad characteristics of civil servants. It mentions that they are always jealous to the good ones, who are competent, active and loyal to the king. They organise groups against them, and outwardly treating like friends, persuade them to join their group, but failing in that attempt, try to kill them. If unsuccessful, they organise conspiracy against them, and sometimes, the king punishes them without going into the allegations, hence the loyal servants suffer much. The epic considers those civil servants as the 'Bhartṛipindāpahārin'⁷² who on the occasions of rendering services to the state remain indifferent, but such ones gain nothing, as in this world, they get defamed, and in the next one go to the hell. Mahākarni,

66. Ibid. 119.15.

67. Aranyaka. 57.19-20.

68. ŚP. 83.9, 14.

69. Ibid. 83.30.

70. Ibid. 112.23-24.

71. Ibid. 112.39-57.

72. Udyoga. 144.16-17.

the minister of the Magadhan king Ambuvicha was such a bad civil servant who acted according to his own sweet will.⁷³ The minister of the enemy of Dyumatsena had killed his own master.⁷⁴

State's control and imposition of discipline

There are many evils in civil servants which cause loss to the state, so it is the king's duty to control them by imposing discipline on them. The officer's negligence, inadventure, and idleness or selfishness can lead to much loss to the Govt. So, they should be kept under strict state's control. The king wishing his prosperity should not be the victim of negligence and idleness. The civil servants should always remember that the king is angry with those, why do not perform their assigned duties promptly and efficiently, hence, they should always be cautious and alert from him, as he being the master of life and property can destroy them acting like an angry serpent.⁷⁵ They should neither speak, nor do evil things against him. This code of conduct is to be followed by them for their well being, as he is like God, who being pleased with their services fulfils all the wishes, but being angry can destroy them completely.⁷⁶ Kautilya,⁷⁷ while referring to the servant's code of conduct refers to these things as mentioned by the epic. They should not misbehave with the subjects and if the king does not desist them from harassing the subjects then it shows his inefficiency.⁷⁸ So, he should impose strict rules of discipline in order to ensure his prosperity. The historical illustrations of the compositional

73. Adi. 196.17-22.

74. Aranyaka. 283.3-4.

75. ŚP. 83.27-29.

76. Ibid. 83.30-31.

77. K.A. 5.4.

78. ŚP. 92.23-24.

period of the epic are not lacking. Aśoka⁷⁹ in many of his inscriptions instructs his civil servants never to harass the subjects. He orders them to be always reasonable to them. The epic also instructs them to follow the king's order and not do anything against his will.⁸⁰

The question arises as to how the king may impose the rules of discipline, and how he can control them? Regarding this, the epic advances many methods and means to achieve that objective. The king's tours in the kingdoms kept the officers on the right track. Dhṛitarāshṭra had advised Yudhishṭhira to move and roam inside his state in disguise of other persons.⁸¹ But, the main instrument in keeping the civil-service under control is espionage,⁸² so, they are always under fear of incurring king's displeasure, hence they act efficiently and remain loyal to the throne. Kauṭilya also advises the king to punish those civil servants who steal away his property and commit other departmental offences causing maladministration and financial loss.⁸³ In order to find out their guilts, he advises him to depute spies after different officials in order to keep watch over their activities.⁸⁴ The epic advances some other methods to have control on them, and in this respect the most effective step is to take disciplinary action against them as it asserts that those civil servants should be immediately dismissed who refuse to perform their duties or act against the king.⁸⁵ Dismissal is an effective instrument to keep them under control. Degradation of civil servants also is very helpful to the king in controlling the disobedient and idle servants.⁸⁶

79. K.R.E. I.

80. Sabhā. 5.41.

81. Aśrama, 10.7.

82. Sabhā. 5.27 ; ŚP. 69.9.

83. K.A. 2.9, 4.9.

84. Ibid. 5.1.

85. Udyoga. 37.24 ; ŚP. 94.31.

86. ŚP. 84.30.

Furthermore, it may be assumed that other types of punishments, such as the imposition of fines, imprisonment, deprivation of property, expulsion from the country and the death penalty also were effective measures to control the civil servants. The epic instructs the king to kill those servants who commit serious crimes.⁸⁷

How should be inflict punishment upon the civil servant ? Should he act according to his own will or follow the advice of others blindly ? No one should be punished without finding out his guilt, and for this, he personally or through his agents should enquire into the cases of allegations or real offence.⁸⁸ Justice should be imparted to all, and loyal and competent civil servants must not be punished blindly.

The performance of the state's affairs depends upon the good relationship which exists between the civil servants and the king. So, the former having faith in the latter, should never discard him, even if he is in distress, and he also should not be angry with those civil servants, who are engaged in the performance of his welfare works.⁸⁹ They should be disciplined, active and loyal to the king, because they support themselves on the salary given by him.

According to the theorists of the epic only a disciplined king can keep the civil servants under control and may force them to obey his orders. The epic sets before him a code of conduct to be followed by him. Vidura advises the king to regard his civil servants as his own persons, who knowing his intentions can carry on his works sincerely.⁹⁰ The state is not his personal property, hence, he should not enjoy alone.⁹¹ Besides this, he should not cut jokes with them, because it is the source of many evils. They begin to insult and disobey him, create confusion in his mind on the problem

87. Ibid. 83.58, 112.38.

88. Sabhā. 6.63 ; ŚP. 112.33.

89. Udyoga. 37.20.

90. Ibid. 37.23.

91. Ibid. 38.22.

of vital importance, disclose the state's policy to the enemies, ask for things that are not to be possessed by them, and enjoy things reserved for him.⁹² Further, they express their views bitterly and are always angry with him, create hindrances in the path of his prosperity, accept bribes and cheat him, weaken the state by issuing false documents, and get free access to the harem.⁹³ They speak to the king bluntly, use his vehicles, if he is sweet and mild ; they take his views lightly, laugh at him when he is angry with them, organise groups based on selfish motives and self interest, disclose the king's weaknesses to the enemies, are dissatisfied with the salary they receive, and steal away the state's property, regard him as a puppet in their hands, and cause destruction to the state.⁹⁴ So, in order to guard against these evils ; he should be neither too mild nor too harsh to them. The epic presents many illustrations of these things. The civil servants of the Kōśala king Kshenadarśin had organised groups among themselves, and stole away the state's property.⁹⁵ Kautilya also refers to the evils among the civil servants and advises them not to behave in this way with the king.⁹⁶ The Rāmāyaṇa also instructs the king not to be either harsh or mild to them, but to be moderate.⁹⁷

The utility of civil servants depends upon the virtues of the king, as even born in high families they do not perform their duties intentionally if he is motivated by the ideas of affection and attachment, has not controlled his senses, and such a king, does not enjoy the fruits of his state.⁹⁸ Kautilya⁹⁹ expresses similar view regarding the utility of civil servants.

92. ŚP. 56.48-50.

93. Ibid. 56.51-52.

94. Ibid. 56.53-60.

95. Ibid. Ch. 83.

96. K.A. 5.4.

97. VR. Ayodhya. 100.52.

98. ŚP. 116.6-7.

99. K.A. 1.18.

The civil servants render their services to the state, and cause prosperity to it, so in lieu of that, the king should perform the deeds of their welfare.¹⁰⁰ It is his duty to encourage those civil servants with sweet words who are very active, swift and efficient, and must respect those who perform their duties well.¹⁰¹ Further he should not terminate the services of those civil servants who are efficient and wish to serve him well.¹⁰²

The Mahābhārata throws light on the notions of the Govt. service. Sage Kālakayrikshīya has regarded it as an evil thing. He thinks that it is the 'Agatikagati' shelter to those who are shelterless or have no means of livelihood,¹⁰³ but, this notion of service always does not hold good. Though, service is the means of livelihood, but in all the cases, it cannot be regarded as 'Agatikagati' because well-to-do persons also join the state's services. These raise the social status of civil servants and are the means of prosperity. Further, the epic asserts that the civil servants are like the poisonous serpents who come in contact with the king, who has fear from them, though he supports them, and they also fear him.¹⁰⁴

100. ŚP. 118.20.21.

101. Ibid. 119.15, 120-22.

102. Sabhā. 5.42, 44, 63.

103. ŚP. 83.24.

104. Ibid. 83.25-26.

Chapter IX

LAW AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

• The administration of justice is one of the most important functions to be discharged by the state. The *Danḍa* is a coercive but an effective power given to the king for regulating the life of the subjects. The state is not an idle institution, it is not an onlooker on the happenings, but is a forceful and living institution to correct those persons who do not follow the rules of conduct, either established by tradition or prescribed by scriptures.

The epic regards *Dharma* as the root of state, hence the enforcement of law is essential for its existence.¹ The *Māyādā* or moral law is well established in society when the king controls the evils, and shows compassion towards the good ones.² The *Mahābhārata* instructs him to punish those who are wicked and do not follow the path of good conduct; by doing so, he gets good results, and after death goes to the heaven, otherwise the hell is reserved for him.³

The necessity of inflicting punishment upon the culprits is well illustrated through the dialouge between king *Dyumat-sena* and prince *Satyavān*.⁴ The former is of the opinion that for the maintenance of life it is esential to punish culprits, otherwise, disorder would prevail in society. *Kauṭilya*⁵ also advances the same view.

It is the fear of *Danḍa* which keeps the four *Varnas* on the right path, as they do not dare to deviate from the path sanctioned by the scriptures. The social order is properly maintained when *Danḍa* is properly utilised by the king.

1. *Āraṇyaka*. 5.4.
2. *Ibid*. 149.48.
3. *Ibid*. 149.48-52.
4. *ŚP*. 259.5-6.
5. *K.A.*, 1.3.

When the people do not follow their duties and encroach upon the rights of other persons, they are corrected and kept on the right path by the kings. It is only when the culprits are not punished, that the mixture of the Varnas begins and all the considerations of life as to what to do and what not, come to an end.

The administration of justice is not merely a matter of public order, but is a sacred and religious duty of the king, and this is made clear by numerous other texts which declare that by reason of the proper administration of justice, the king will not merely obtain the good will of his subjects, but would attain the heaven, and that by miscarriage of justice he will not merely lose the good will of his subjects, but also incur punishment for sin.

Concept of Dharma and Daṇḍa

The epic while referring to the administration of Justice mentions many times the Dharma and the Daṇḍa. In order to know the judicial system, it is necessary to understand these two key concepts.

Dharma is a very comprehensive term. Though it is translated into English as religion⁶, but it does not give its true and complete meaning. The Dharma stands for a way, a path of life and a mode of conduct. It has originated from the root 'Dhri' which means to hold or support, so it should be regarded as the embodiment of all those rules and means which sustain the world, and particularly the human life.⁷ But, it is not a rigid principle of life, it is ever changing and modified according to the circumstances, hence the epic regards it as based on the time and place factors.⁸

6. For the meaning of religion see Derrett, J.D.M., Religion, Law and the State in India, pp. 35-39.

7. ŚP. 110.11, 251.4.

8. Ibid. 37.8.

Dharma also means the law or the Ordinance and stands for the moral concepts which are to be protected and preserved by the king. He is the protector of Dharma and it is his duty to enforce its observance by the people. He is not the head of the law, but its regulator and is considered more as protector of the social and moral principles. He can protect the general and constitutional aspects of the social and moral conduct.

Dharma indicates the duties of the persons and stands for the maintenance of Āśrama and Varna Dharmas, which the king has to enforce, and to punish those who violate them. The Varna and Āśrama schemes were conceived to enable the society to make the best of the potentialities in the individual, so that, through the functioning of the best and the finest that individuals are capable of, the best may be formulated and inherited by the group.⁹

In short, it may be said that Dharma stands for moral and ethical duties, good works, religious virtues, the universal truth, divine justice, conventions, social and individual duties, Inter-tribal and international law. The king has to work according to its injunctions in its comprehensive meaning.

Like Dharma, Daṇḍa also has different meanings. Its literal meaning is the staff, but politically it means the kingly power and his authority to inflict punishment upon the culprits. The root of Daṇḍa is discipline. The notion of Daṇḍa is apparent in the use of the phrase like Daṇḍadhṛita, Weilder of Daṇḍa. The king has to utilise it for punishing the culprits in order to maintain the social order and peace, but it is not an instrument to crush the people, but a means to render services to them.

The epic discusses its different aspects by presenting a discourse between Bhīṣma and Yudhishṭhira as what is the Daṇḍa? How is it and what are its different forms? What

9. Gheeval, C. L., The Moral basis of the Hindu theory of sovereignty, ADCV, Pt. 2, p. 84.

is the ground of its existence? What are its functions and how did it come into being? How does it protect the people? How does it control them? What are its different names and how did it come to the Kshatriyas¹⁰?

According to the epic-theorists it is the ultimate physical power which has been given to the king for the protection of Dharma or the regulation of law.¹¹ It has been regarded as Vyavahāra¹² because it means the thing which removes the Avahāra—dissolution of Dharma. So, in this way, the main aim of Daṇḍa is the preservation of Dharma which results in all round prosperity.¹³

The circumstances leading to the origin of Daṇḍa have been discussed in the discourse between kings Māndhātā and Vasuhoma.¹⁴ The central points of this discussion are two main problems, that how did the Daṇḍa come into being, and how did it come to the Kshatriyas.¹⁵ The main reason for the origin of Daṇḍa in the remote past was the state of anarchy, on account of which, all the beings were suffering. The epic discusses this point from a religious point of view and attributes the origin of Daṇḍa to Brahmā or Śiva for eradicating the state of lawlessness.¹⁶ The story of the origin of the sword also indicates that Daṇḍa (Sword) was created by the divine being for destroying the evil and preserving the good.¹⁷ It narrates the tradition of handing over the Daṇḍa by many persons, and at last it was handed over by Manu to his sons for the protection of the Dharma. The approach of the epic is purely religious, but it shows that Daṇḍa came into being for the eradication of the evil.¹⁸

10. ŚP. 121.5-7.

11. Ibid. 121.8-9.

12. For details see, Sircar, U. C., Hindu Legal History, pp. 34-38.

13. ŚP. 121.10-13.

14. Ibid. Ch. 122.

15. Ibid. 122.12-13.

16. Ibid. 122.18-24.

17. Ibid. Ch. 160.

18. Ibid. 122.26-42.

Regarding the Svarūpa or form of Daṇḍa, the epic imagines that it is like the fire that burns on whom it is applied.¹⁹ It is the great god, as it protects the good ones and eradicates the evil elements. All the weapons are its forms to punish the culprits.²⁰ It is the Tikhshṇavarmā, Śāstā, Vijaya, Dharmapāla and Śivaṅkara. It has many forms, and about 80 forms have been described in the epic.²¹ In complexion it is black because being inflicted, it produces darkness before the eyes of the offenders, it is red-eyed as the inflictor of Daṇḍa is very angry with the person on whom it is inflicted.²² Manu also refers to this form of Daṇḍa.²³

What are the functions to be discharged by it? Daṇḍa's main functions are the suppression of the evil and protection of the good ones. It makes the people very alert and forces them to follow the established rules of good conduct.²⁴ It produces the sense of fear in the minds of people, and thus, reminds them to act according to the law. It protects the moral laws in society and causes prosperity to all.²⁵

Who can hold it?²⁶ The thinkers of the epic advance the view that none else but the Kshatriya is entitled to hold it, as he is only capable, but the powerful kings execute it better on the culprits than a weak Kshatriya.²⁷ These things indicate that the Govt. alone is empowered to inflict punishment upon the culprits and not others.

The epic refers to two main types of Daṇḍa namely the Bhartripratyaya and Vedapratyaya. The two contrary

19. Ibid. 121.13.

20. Ibid. 121.19-21.

21. Ibid. Ch. 121.

22. Ibid. 15.11.

23. Manu. 7.25.

24. ŚP. 15.22.

25. Ibid. 15.4-8, 121.1-4, 34-35.

26. Ibid. 121.7.

27. Ibid. 121.41.

28. Ibid. 121.48-49.

versions urged by two parties to the dispute, that which is seen to amenable to evidence, comes within the designation of Bhartripratyaya Daṇḍa.²⁹ Other affairs fall under the exclusive prerogative of the Vedas, and Daṇḍa administered in such cases is the Vedapratyaya, which can be either Maula (Kulāchāra) or sanctioned by the Śāstras (Śāstroktā).³⁰ The Śruti and Smṛiti lay down the ultimate law in the case of the Vedapratyaya-lakṣhaṇa-Daṇḍa, which has to be above all. The question may arise as to the nature of the former type of Daṇḍa because here the final authority rests with the king.³¹ But, can he make no mistakes? This important issue is raised and answered in this way that Brahman has laid down rules in the Vedas or he has formulated Dharma, the ultimate object of which is the undisturbed continuity of the established and eternal order of things for the smooth running of all human affairs. The Daṇḍa is the means placed in the hands of the king for the smooth running of all the human affairs on the path of righteousness.³² Therefore, the former type of Daṇḍa which is Vyavahārātmaka, ensures the peaceful regulation of human affairs and is endorsed by the Śruti-smṛiti and divine will. This is, therefore, higher than the human dispensation of justice through the king, a tribunal to which patriots of all lands, condemned by the human administrators of justice here below, have always made their final appeal.

Sources of Law

The epic has instructed the king to act according to the injunction of Dharma. But where from does it originate³³? It does not refer to sources of Dharma in a systematic

29. Ibid. 121.48.

30. Ibid. 121.49.

31. Ibid. 121.50.

32. Ibid. 121.53-56.

33. Ibid. 251.1.

manner, but there are several scanty references which throw considerable light on the problem. There are four types of the source of Dharma such as the Śruti, Smṛiti, Sadāchāra and Parishad. Other works also refer to these sources of Dharma.

The thinkers of the epic regard the Vedas as the source of law and they refer to the laws approved by them as the Vedokta and Vedantadhigata Dharma.³⁴ Kṛishṇa is referred to as citing the authority of the Vedas as the source of Dharma in order to prove the legality of the Niyoga-vidhi.³⁵ The expressions "Vaidikam, Ityeshā-Vaidiki Sthiti, Ityeshā śrūyate Śrutiḥ" reveal the fact.³⁶ These things become more apparent when the epic regards Daṇḍa as Vedātmā and Veda-pratyaya (enjoined by the Vedas) and according to it Dharma is originated from the Vedas (Veda-prasūtadharma).³⁷ On many controversial matters, it presents the opinion of the scholars of the vedas (Itiveda-vido-viduh).³⁸

As a matter of fact, the Vedas do not contain the matters of law in a direct way, but contain disconnected statements on various aspects of Dharma, from which, some rules bearing on Vyavahāra may be inferred or deduced. The Mahābhārata, like other treatises, regards the Vedas as the supreme source of Dharma on the ground that these are the very breath of the Brahman.

Besides referring to the Vedas as the source of Dharma, the epic also regards the Dharmaśāstras as a source of law and instructs the king to act according to their injunctions. The original Code of Brahma, and the composite work by the Chitrasikhandinah are referred to as containing the matters relating to Dharma. Kṛishṇa has cited the authority of the Dharmaśāstras. Though, these are the sources of

34. Ibid. 54.19-21.

35. Udyoga, 138.7.

36. ŚP. 77.10, 80.9, 80.16 respectively.

37. Ibid. 121.49, 52.

38. Ibid. 77.13.

Dharma, but the epic regards that these must be based on the injunctions of the Vedas.³⁹ The rules of the Dharmaśāstras were based on the customs, traditions and conventions which were accepted by the society. Though, believed to embody what the sages remembered, the Dharmaśāstras imply human authorship, and thus, these introduced human authorship and agency in the declaration of law.

Does the Śāstra alone decide the Dharma? Or is the logic alone capable of deciding it? The Mbh. takes a very practical approach, and citing the views of Uśanas and Brihaspati it informs that the Śāstra and logic both should be utilised while deciding Dharma.⁴⁰ It is due to this fact that sometimes the Śāstras advance contradictory views, so, wise persons decide it with the help of their wisdom, only study of the Śāstras cannot decide it, as from time to time, even the authority of the Vedas changes.⁴¹

Sadāchāra⁴² or good conduct of good ones also is the source of Dharma, if it is not opposed to the rules formulated by the Śruti and Smṛiti.⁴³ Dharma originates from the good customs.⁴⁴ The importance of the Sadāchāra may be estimated from this fact that Āpastamba refers to the Śruti and Sadāchāra as the only two sources of Dharma.⁴⁵ In all the early societies, the custom was the supreme force and was obeyed, the Govt. had not been evolved at that time, and so, no formal law had come into existence. Sociability and imitation gave rise to the similarity of conduct, and the latter to custom.

But, are all conducts of the good person to be followed

39. Ibid. 252.9-10.

40. Ibid. 140.16, 20-22.

41. Ibid. 252.3-4, 7-8.

42. For details see Derrett, J.D.M., op.cit., pp. 148ff.

43. ŚP. 252.5.

44. Āranyaka. 149.28.

45. ADS. 1.1.2-3.

or to be considered as the source of law⁴⁶? The thinkers of the epic view that only the good conducts are to be followed, and bad conducts of good persons should not be considered as the source of Dharma. Paraśurāma had killed his mother on his father's order, but such actions of the great ones, are not to be followed.

Sadāchāra is difficult to be defined because a custom that may be good under certain circumstances may be bad under others. Sage Viśvāmitra knew well that it is not the good conduct to eat the flesh of the dog, but in critical situations, he thought it proper to partake it, in order to save his life from starvation. In order to prove his view-point, he cites an example of sage Agastya who ate the flesh of Vātāpī.⁴⁷ The central point is that Dharma is not a rigid principle of life, it takes shapes according to the place and time factors. It is to be inferred from the conduct of the good persons.⁴⁸ But, are their conducts opposed to the Vedas to be followed? Yudhishthira's proposal to Drupada to marry 5 Pāṇḍavas with his daughter was opposed by him on account of its being repugnant to the Vedas and custom, but the former argued that Dharma is subtle, and cannot be scrutinised. This is an interesting example of a custom being followed in the teeth of the Vedic and the social opposition (Lokaveda-viruddha).⁴⁹

In order to know the scope and nature of the custom, it is necessary to deal with Kula, Jāti, Śreṇī and Deśadharmas, as these were described in the comprehensive code of Brahmā. References to these sources of law are noticed in the epic as well as in the code of Manu.⁵⁰

The Kula dharma was an important matter in religious rituals. Among the Kurus, it was the Dharma to coronate

46. ŚP. 252.6.

47. Ibid. 139.67.

48. Ibid. 130.21, 259.26, 140.18-19.

49. Ādi. 187.26-28.

50. ŚP. 37.14, 59.71, 78.19 ; Manu. 1.118.

the eldest son as the king and the violation of this Kula-dharma, by the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra has been condemned by sage Vyāsa.⁵¹ The epic informs that during the reign of Kekaya king, the subjects followed the Kula-dharmas. It is to be noted that different families followed their own family traditions.

The Jātidharma consisted of customs and practices peculiar to different castes and sub-castes. The Brāhmaṇas were the writers of the law books, so they mainly described the Jāti-dharmas of their own Varna and touched the Dharma of others, but they have hardly touched the Dharmas of the sub-castes which were based upon trade and professions and who had their own guilds and trade conventions. Their laws of marriage and adoption were formulated by them and the court had to keep in view the Jātidharma in deciding the cases of the sub-castes. The Śreṇidharma was formulated and followed by the guilds of merchants and other professional and industrial organisations.⁵²

The Deśa-Dharma is the custom of a particular place. The epic asserts that Dharma is a changeable thing and it takes its form according to the time and place factors⁵³, so it is not necessary to practice the same law throughout the whole country in different conditions. Hence, it is the Deśa-Dharma, which is responsible for the great variations in Hindu law in different regions.

On certain occasions, the three sources may present contradictory opinions, so how is the matter to be decided? These should be decided by a council of learned persons technically known as the Parishad. It was an adhoc body called for special occasions. According to Baudhāyana and Gautama, it was to be convened when there were doubts (Saṁśaya) and conflict of opinions (Vipratipatti⁵⁴) respectively.

51. Udyoga. 146.29 ; Bhishma. 4.6.

52. ŚP. 37-14.

53. Ibid. 37.8.

54. Views quoted by Altekar, A. S., SHD, p. 49.

Manu thinks that it should be convened when new point is to be decided upon.⁵⁵ The Mahābhārata also refers to the existence of an institution to decide the matters in Dharmasamśaya (Doubt in law).⁵⁶ But who can decide matters and what should be the number of such persons? Different authorities have expressed different opinions. According to Gautama, there should be either one or three person while Baudhāyana thinks that such matters should be decided by a council of either 5 or 10 members. Vāśiṣṭha is in favour of either 3 or 10, while Manu suggests the number as advanced by the last mentioned Dharmasūtrākāra.⁵⁷ It is interesting to note that the epic also refers to the number of the members of the Parishad to be the same as suggested by Vāśiṣṭha and Manu. They should be well versed in the Vedic and scriptural studies.⁵⁸

The epic refers to such an occasion when the Parishad was convened to decide a doubtful matter and that was the marriage of the five Pāṇḍavas with Draupadi.

According to Drupada it was against the Vedic and social tradition.⁵⁹ Vyāsa was approached to give his verdict on the matter.⁶⁰ Drupada, Dhṛiṣṭadyumna, Yudhisṭhira and Kuntī expressed their views on the problem, and Vyāsa, after listening to the views of all⁶¹, approved the view of Yudhisṭhira that one woman may be married with many persons.⁶² At one place, the epic informs that the matter of Dharma is very subtle, it has many forms, so it should be decided upon according to the view of the wise ones and as approved by the Vedas.⁶³

55. Manu. 12.108.

56. ŚP. 37.15.

57. GDS. 3.10.47-48 ; BDS. 1.1.9.10-13 ; VDS. 4.23 ; Manu. 12.110.

58. ŚP. 37.15.

59. Adi. 187.26-27.

60. Ibid. 188.4-6.

61. Ibid. 188.7-17.

62. Ibid. 188.22.

63. Aranyaka. 198.78.

But, really speaking, the Parishad is not the source of Dharma in the same sense in which we take the Śruti, Smṛiti and Sadāchāra. It is only a machinery to decide doubtful matters and to give verdict on new problems.

King and Judiciary

It is the king's duty to hold Daṇḍa and punish the culprits. As Guru is the Śāstā of pupils, so he is to the evil-doers. He is like Yama to those, who commit sin. Though he is the Daṇḍadhara, but all kings cannot utilise it. The king should be Daṇḍavid as having little knowledge he cannot protect the subjects. But the people cannot be persuaded to follow the right path, if the king has not controlled himself. Such a king is ridiculed by them.

It is his duty to be always ready to inflict punishment upon the culprits⁶⁴, otherwise he causes destruction to the society. Kautilya and Manu⁶⁵ also have advanced the same theory. The king is not free to inflict punishment according to his own sweet will. So the epic opines that he should inflict Daṇḍa properly upon the culprits.⁶⁶ This mode of his conduct has been regarded as his highest duty.⁶⁷ But how a king can inflict Daṇḍa properly? He may do so acting according to the injunctions of the law.⁶⁸ So, he must inflict punishment without any consideration or hesitation, and such a king never falls, but is always prosperous.⁶⁹ He should destroy these persons who create hindrances in the path of progress. Even the Tāpasas also must be killed if they prove themselves as anti-social elements.⁷⁰

64. ŚP. 120.9.

65. K.A. 1.3 ; Manu. 7.20.

66. Anuśāsana. 128.51.

67. Ibid. 128.49-51.

68. Ibid. 131.37.

69. ŚP. 56.47.

70. Ibid. 32.5-8.

It is possible that he may inflict very light punishment for crimes of serious nature, and very harsh punishment for light offences, but this type of imparting justice is not praiseworthy. The people disobey and insult him, if he is very sweet, but revolt against him if they are harassed by inflicting very harsh punishments.⁷¹ So, the best course is that he should inflict punishment keeping in view the seriousness of the offences. He should be a moderate man like the sun in the spring, which is neither too hot nor too cold.⁷² The Arthaśāstra and the Rāmāyaṇa also furnish similar information.⁷³ Aśoka also instructs his officers-in-charge of judicial administration to be moderate while inflicting punishment upon the culprits.⁷⁴

The results of inflicting punishment by the king are many. By doing so, he creates conditions for the prosperity of society⁷⁵, and by maintaining peace he earns the goodwill of his subjects.⁷⁶ Protection of the people and regulation of laws are his duties, but failing in their execution he is punished by the gods.⁷⁷ Such a king is not praised by the people, and is regarded as the king who impurifies the Dharma (Dharmadūṣaṇa), and this act is considered as the Dasyudharma because he does not protect the people by sparing Danda.⁷⁸ The above mentioned two epithets have been used by Draupadi for king Virāṭa who was not punishing Kichaka for beating her in the court. The king, falls into the hell to suffer for a long time, if he does not control the culprits by punishing them, but the case is otherwise, if he follows his duties, and goes to the heaven to enjoy a happy life forever. This dictum furnished by the epic always stimulates the kings

71. Ibid. 56.21.

72. Ibid. 56.40.

73. K.A. 1.3 ; V, R. Ayodhyā, 110, 27.

74. Kaliṅga, R.E.I.

75. Udyoga. 34.56.

76. ŚP. 69.29.

77. Ibid. 121.47.

78. Virāṭa. 15.23-24.

and administrators to be engaged in the performance of their duties.

Principle of Judiciary

The Mahābhārata furnishes some principle to be followed by the officers-in-charge of judicial administration, so that they may impart true justice to the subjects. There should be no delay in imparting justice to the parties, otherwise many evils come into being.⁷⁹

While imparting justice to the culprits, the king should be very impartial to all those who violate the rules of law even if they are his parents, brothers, wives and Purohita.⁸⁰ Though, it is his duty to love the subjects like his own sons, but while imparting justice, he must not show affection to them.⁸¹ The son is the most affectionate object in the world, but he also is not to be spared if he commits offences.⁸² The epic presents many examples to prove its view point. Janaka⁸³ of Mithilā and Sagara of Ayodhyā⁸⁴ had punished their guilty sons. Further it instructs the king to punish the servants, friends, and even the Guru, if they commit offences and violate the rules.⁸⁵

In order to be impartial he is instructed to inflict punishment after examining the cases. Due to this, the innocent persons are not punished, and true justice is imparted to the parties. The epic clearly advances the view that the king prospers if he inflicts punishment after examining the cases and finding out the real offenders.⁸⁶ Satyavān is referred

79. ŚP. 120.9.

80. Ibid. 121.56-57, 259.29.

81. Ibid. 69.26.

82. Ibid. 92.31.

83. Āraṇyaka. 198.28.

84. ŚP. 75.8-9.

85. Ibid. 32.5-8, 57.5-7.

86. Udyoga. 33.86.

to as saying to his father that the kings may kill the persons who are not real offenders, so, it is their duty to examine the cases properly prior to inflicting punishment on them.⁸⁷ It is a means for going to the heaven, otherwise the king goes to the hell.⁸⁸ There are some illustration to show that the kings regarded it as very disastrous to punish the culprits without examining the cases.⁸⁹ The story of tiger and jackal shows that the king should not punish the offender whether real or alleged, without investigating into the cases, and even the clear cases also must be well examined, otherwise he perishes away very soon.⁹⁰ He should act like the Yama to those who are evil doers, but must be like Dharma to those who are the good ones, and for this, he should inflict punishment upon the culprits after carefully examining the cases.⁹¹

An accused was entitled to plead duress, self-defence, and minority in his defence. Ancient Indian jurists differ as to the age when minority would cease to be a defence. Some of them are in favour of granting absolute exemption till the age of 8 and others⁹² till the age of 15. The epic asserts that a boy of 12 cannot be regarded as a culprit, as by that age, he is unable to understand the Dharma, but sage Anīmāṇḍavya opines that concession should be given to the boys up to the age of 14.⁹³ In deciding punishment, the judges had to take into consideration the age and physical consideration of offenders and circumstances⁹⁴ in which the offences were committed. Boys, fools, blind, deaf, and person of superior ranks should not be punished.⁹⁵

87. ŚP. 259.9-10, 137.38-39.

88. Ibid. 86.23-24, 71.1-2, 7.

89. Adi. 3.1-9.

90. ŚP. 112.1-66.

91. Sabhā. 5.58.

92. Altekar, A. S., SGAI, p. 256.

93. Adi. 101.26.

94. ŚP. 259.31-35.

95. Ibid. 151.30-31.

While deciding upon the cases, the judges had to take into consideration the nature of crime, the motive of accused and his status in society. For committing the same type of the offence the culprits of the four Varnas are to be punished differently.⁹⁶ The Brāhmanas are the most privileged class and the Śūdras the depressed one, so these have to receive the severest type of punishment. The Brāhmanas also are to be punished severely if they violate the rules of conduct and are not discharging their duties.⁹⁷ Expulsion from the state was the severest punishment for them. Even the Sannyāsins and Tapasvins also are to be punished, if they violate the rules of conduct. The difference was only in the degree of punishment.⁹⁸

The culprits should be punished in accordance with the gravity of the offence.⁹⁹ For light offence, harsh punishment must not be inflicted, but it should be of the proper¹⁰⁰ type. The king, who wants to inflict proper punishment on the culprits, prospers much.¹⁰¹ So, he should always have proper control over them¹⁰² and punishment should be properly inflicted.¹⁰³

Organisation of Judiciary

The growth of the state's activities and establishment of extensive empires, necessitated the organisation of judicial agencies to work on behalf of the king, hence, the courts and judges came into being. In the epic there are many scanty references to show that during its compositional period there existed a well established judicial system.

96. Ibid. 15.9.

97. Ibid. 77.11.

98. Ibid. 259.15, 32.5-8.

99. Ibid. 86.19.

100. Ibid. 122, 41, 54.

101. Udyoga. 33.86.

102. ŚP. 120.29.

103. Ibid. 59.69.

The courts were the main institutions to impart justice to the people, but the epic does not furnish more details regarding them. Kautilya has referred to two types of law namely Vyavahāra and Kṛtakasādhana¹⁰⁴ which represent the present civil and the criminal laws. The epic also refers to these two types¹⁰⁵, so, it may be inferred that it intends to refer to two types of courts after the names of these two types of laws. These were established at the headquarters of different administrative units.

Some later writers refer to the popular courts which were not instituted by the state, but by the popular bodies, and such courts decided internal disputes which arose in the organisations. Yājñavalkya and Brihaspati refer to such courts as the Śrenī, Puga and Kula.¹⁰⁶

There were many officers-in-charge of judicial administration, and the epic prescribes their qualifications, duties, responsibilities, and the code of conduct to be followed by them.

The king is the supreme head of the Judicial administration. Generally, he is seen in the Sabhā-Maṇḍapa surrounded by the priest and the ministers for imparting justice. The epic considers the Daṇḍa as the Naikanayanah¹⁰⁷—having many eyes, that in which numerous instruments are employed for the perception of the truth, i.e. many persons are required for imparting true justice to the parties. Hence, the king was assisted by many persons namely the priest, the Sabhyas and ministers. Manu also is of the same opinion.¹⁰⁸ The king was the highest court of appeal, and his decision was final.

Purohita also played an important role in this respect and he was the king's chief adviser. The culprits may be released

104. K. A. Adhikaraṇas, 3-4.

105. ŚP. 59.53.

106. Altekar, A. S., SGAP, p. 251.

107. ŚP. 121.14.

108. Manu. 8.1.

if they go to the Purohita and promise never to commit the offence again.¹⁰⁹ He has to be well versed in the Śāstrika knowledge and has to acquaint himself with the current and out dated practices in society.

The Prāḍa-vivāka¹¹⁰ who may be equated with the Chief Justice of present times, was a prominent person in the field of judicial administration. This term denotes a person who examines and cross-examines, investigates the whole matters, and pronounces a decision. The epic does not refer to the qualifications to be possessed, and duties to be performed by him, but later works mention these things. He was the judicial officer whose position was sub-ordinate to the king ; but his functions were not merely advisory.

Besides the Chief-Justice, there were many judges to administer justice in different courts established by the state. The epic refers to the qualifications of judges. Dhṛitarāshṭra has advised Yudhishṭhira to appoint such person as judges who are reliable and have purity of ideas.¹¹¹ The persons to be appointed as judges must be well read persons (Bahu-śrutāḥ).¹¹² This view, as advanced by the Mahābhārata is similar to the view expressed by Āpastamba that the judges dealing with law suits should be endowed with learning, good family background, wisdom, and clarity of thinking about the nature of Dharma.¹¹³ Sometimes, the judges are designated with the term Purusha¹¹⁴ whose duty is to impart justice to the people.

Should the judges be allowed to work free without any check over them ? They are free to work as far as their field is concerned but must be controlled in another way. It may be possible for them to accept bribe from the parties but it

109. ŚP. 259.14-15.

110. Ibid. 121.45.

111. Aśrama. 10.1-2.

112. ŚP. 25.17.

113. ADS. 2.11.29.5.

114. Aśrama. 10.2.

upsets the very root of justice. So, the kings should set spies after them to find out evils in them for imparting true justice to the people.¹¹⁵ They must be severely punished even with the death penalty if they are found guilty of accepting bribe, having illicit relations with wives of other persons or inflict improper punishment upon the offenders, impart false justice, utter harsh words, are greedy and daring in committing immoral acts.¹¹⁶ Kautilya also has advanced somewhat identical view as he opines that judges should be impartial and must impart true justice.¹¹⁷ The epic also furnishes the same information regarding this matter.¹¹⁸

The sabhyas¹¹⁹ or Jurors, acted as the assistants to the king and judges, and they helped and advised them on legal matters. The Sabhā Parvan throws light on their qualifications and duties while narrating Draupadī's case of assault by Duḥśāsana in the Kaurava¹²⁰ court. It is their duty to express their views on legal matters without any hesitation, otherwise they violate the Dharma.¹²¹ They must be learned and impartial, and should protect the Dharma.¹²² According to Vidura, the persons come to the court for getting true justice, so, it is their duty to pacify them by uttering sweet words and imparting true legal justice¹²³ to them. They should explain the case and discard ill-motives towards¹²⁴ all. They have been regarded as the 'Dharma-darsins', so it is their duty to advise the king on legal matters, and by remaining silent, they become sinner and are punished by Varuṇa.¹²⁵

115. Ibid. 10.1.

116. Ibid. 10.2-4.

117. K.A. 4.4, 4.9.

118. Aśrama. 10.2 ; K.A. 3.20.

119. Sabhā, 60.30, 61.49, 52.

120. Ibid. Chapters 61-62.

121. Ibid. 61.52.

122. Ibid. 60.29, 33.

123. Ibid. 61.53.

124. Ibid. 61.54.

125. Ibid. 61.57, 61.

Judicial Procedure

Punishment should be inflicted upon those persons only whose offence have been proved¹²⁶ after careful examination.¹²⁷ This statement apparently indicates the prevalence of a judicial procedure. But as a matter of fact, there is no systematic treatment of this subject in the epic and only a few scanty references are found ; so it is better to draw more information from the contemporary works in order to elaborate the points in this connection.

Filing the case is the first step in judicial procedure in which the plaintiff states the matters regarding his case. The epic does not refer to this practice in writing, and some illustrations show the plaintiffs going to the king's court to complain orally, as is apparent from the story of Śaṅkha-Likhita.¹²⁸

The next stage was summoning of the defendant. The courts tried disputes as soon as it was possible. The defendant on being summoned by the court, gave his statement. Though, there is no direct evidence of summoning the defendant by the court in the epic but the elaborate rules concerning the witness clearly indicate that the defendants had to defend their cases. The question arises us to what the state could do if the defendant did not present himself in the court ? The epic is not informative on this point. Possibly, such a defendant was arrested by the state or the case was decided in favour of the plaintiff.

Kautilya¹²⁹ is of view that if the plaintiff files his answer after the defendant and does not begin to support his case on the same day, he should, in that case, be declared to be defeated as he comes to the court after determining the strength of his case, but the defendant does not do so ; so he may be allowed an adjournment of three or seven days for his defence. But, the epic does not refer to this procedure.

126. Udyoga. 33.86.

127. Ibid. 34.56.

128. ŚP. Chapter 24.

129. K.A. 3.1.

All cases were not simple to be decided upon ; so the witnesses were required. King Virāṭa on being vehemently criticised by Draupadi for his failure in punishing Kichaka has been referred to as saying, "How can I impart justice in this case without knowing it fully as it did not occur in my presence".¹³⁰ This statement clearly shows that the court asked both the parties to present their witnesses. The evidence of witnesses was taken when both the parties presented contradictory statements.¹³¹ But, in the case, in which it is impossible to present the witness, what should be done ? The epic asserts that such cases should be decided by the king according to his own discretion.¹³²

But, who is the witness and what should be his requisites ? Pāṇini explains the term Śākshin¹³³ as meaning "one who had directly seen". The Mahābhārata¹³⁴ also furnishes the same information when it defines the Śākshin as one who personally has seen the occurrence of the case (Samakshadarśanāt), or has heard of it (Śravaṇāt), or has his own ideas of it (Dhāraṇāt). Manu¹³⁵ also defines the term Śākshina in line with the epic. Regarding their number the epic is silent, but Gautama and Manu think that there should be at least three¹³⁶ Śākshins.

The question arises whether all the persons are allowed to tender their evidence ? Those persons, who should not be allowed to do so are palmists, smugglers, gamblers, physicians, foes, friends and professional singers.¹³⁷ Manu also furnishes the same information.¹³⁸

130. Virāṭa. 15.27.

131. ŚP. 86.18.

132. Ibid.

133. Ashṭādhyāyī. 5.2.91.

134. Sabhā. 61.76.

135. Manu. 8.74.

136. GDS. 13.2 ; Manu. 8.60.

137. Udyoga. 35.37.

138. Manu. 8.61-71.

Prior to giving evidences, the witness had to take oath before a jar of water or the fire to speak the truth, failing which he was supposed to be punished by Varuṇa. The epic does not refer to this practice, but discusses the good or bad consequences arising out of speaking truth, and falsehood in the court as a Śākshin. The discourse between "Sudhanvā and Prahlāda"¹³⁹ throws light on the results that are incurred by telling falsehood in the courts in connection with the disputes - (Vivāda). The witness should not remain silent knowing the facts as it also results in grave consequences to him in both the worlds.¹⁴⁰

Does it mean that it is essential to speak the truth in all conditions? There are some extraordinary conditions in which false things may be spoken in the court as for example for the protection of life either from dangers or from death.¹⁴¹ Manu also supports this view.¹⁴² The Śākshin should be very impartial, and must not cultivate relations with both parties.

The epic does not deal with the matter of scrutinizing the evidences, and the methods, which help the judges in coming to a conclusion, when there are many witnesses who differ in their statements. Kauṭilya thinks that the statement of majority of the witnesses should be accepted, but if they are equally divided, then the statement of those should be accepted who are more true.¹⁴³ If the meritorious ones are divided equally, then those who are the best among them should be accepted as true.¹⁴⁴

How were the cases to be decided when all the evidences failed? The courts, perhaps, sent their spies to find out the

139. Udyoga. Ch. 35 ; Sabhā. 61.72-76.

140. Adi. 7.3-4.

141. Ibid. 77.16-17.

142. Manu. 8.104.

143. K.A. 3.11.

144. Manu. 8.73.

truth. When this also failed, ordeals were held, but the epic does not refer to them.

The epic does not refer to the persons professing legal profession. As a matter of fact, for the first time, reference to the pleader is found in a commentary by Asahāya on Nārada-Smṛiti.¹⁴⁵ The legal matters became very complicated after the growth of Smṛitis during or after the Gupta age, so the references to the pleader may not be sought in it.

Theories of Punishment

Punishment as retribution presupposes the idea of the divine punishment to be inflicted upon persons who do evil deeds, break the law and go against the moral order. Varuṇa punishes those who violate the rules of law. The epic refers to some other retributive punishments. According to Yudhishthira to inflict pain when pained, to take revenge on him who takes revenge, to retaliate when struck, and to do harm in return for harm are items of retributive judgement.¹⁴⁶

Punishment as expiation was believed to be possible, and it seems to be a part of the supernatural action. It is more religious than political in nature. Purificatory water was used to remove the sin; hence the epic describes the importance of bath in the holy rivers.¹⁴⁷ Penance and fasting also are recommended by it as the purificatory measures for different types of sins.¹⁴⁸ In some cases, the king is to be approached for expiation through punishment as it is seen in case of sage Likhita who went to king Sudyuman to be purified by punishment which was to be inflicted by the king

145. Kane, P. V., H.D, Vol. 3, Ch. 14.

146. Aranyaka, Ch. 30.

147. Ibid. Chapters 81.83.

148. ŚP. Ch. 159.

for the offence of theft.¹⁴⁹ Here, it seems that the religious consciousness is applied to politics. The theory of expiation is closely parallel to the *Mīmāṃsā* doctrine of *Adṛiṣṭa* or *Apūrva*. The doctrine of the *Karman* is the main factor in the above doctrine and this theory wears out the effects of sin to be met in the next life.

Punishment as restraint has been discussed in the epic. The restraining function of punishment seems to be the predominant note of the epic theorists. The *Danḍa* corrects the culprits so that others may not repeat the criminal acts. The punishment does not stand for 'tit for tat' but its aim is to check wrong doing. The king is *Yama*, whose duty is to control those who violate the law.¹⁵⁰

Punishment as preservation pre-supposes the preservation of the social security through punishment. An ideal king punishes the law-breakers for preservation. In case of their deviation from the law, the king should save the people by applying just punishment. From the stand point of the modern criminology, it may be said that the purpose of criminal law is to defend the society, and that purpose must be strictly realised, no matter what happens to the individual criminal. Hence the epic instructs the king to punish even his parents, *Guru*, *Purohita* and the *Tāpasas*, if they break the law.¹⁵¹ At all costs the society must be preserved, and the law should be maintained.

Punishment as discipline is closely related to the punishment as preservation. The people are brought to the right path with the help of *Danḍa*. The epic-theorists have advanced this view that the persons are corrected and brought to the right path when the king utilises his *Danḍa*.¹⁵² Being afraid of the sufferings caused by it, the people do not deviate from the right path and observe discipline, which results in

149. *Ibid.* Ch. 24.

150. *Vide this Ch.*

151. *ŚP.* 5-8, 121, 56-57, 259.29.

152. *Supra.* Ch. 2.

peace and order. Kauṭilya¹⁵³ also gives emphasis on discipline for the purpose of safety and security. His aim is to educate the people and to make them good citizens through punishment applied with care.

Punishment as reformation is a later development arising out of the principle of restraint. If the restraint is to be secured on a permanent basis, then the habit of the criminals need to be changed and transformed, and when this is secured, the results are expected to be lasting. The right method of dealing with it will be to treat the causes rather than the patient. It means the reformation of the criminal by eliminating the criminal tendencies. Hence it is the king's duty to bring the people to the right path. Punishment as reformation is best illustrated in the dialogue between king Dyumatsena and prince Satyavān in which the latter says that if the offenders give themselves up to the Purohita, swearing before him never to commit sin, then they may be left off after going through penance.¹⁵⁴

Kinds of Punishments

The Mahābhārata refers to two kinds of punishment,¹⁵⁵ but does not enumerate them. It may be assumed that these are the corporal and non-corporal punishments. Again it refers to four kinds of punishment namely the gentle admonition (Dhigdaṇḍa), severe reproof (Vāgdaṇḍa), imposition of fine (Ādānadaṇḍa) and lastly the capital punishment (Vadha-daṇḍa). But these four kinds also come within the fold of corporal and non-corporal punishments.¹⁵⁶

The epic mentions Śārirapīḍā or torture, and Śāṭra-daṇḍa¹⁵⁷; corporal punishment to be inflicted upon the

153. K.A. 1.4.

154. ŚP. 259.11-15.

155. Ibid. 58.10.

156. Ibid. 259.19-20; Manu. 8.129.

157. Ibid. 122.41.

158. Ibid. 56.31-33.

offenders of all the Varnas, except in cases of the Brāhmaṇas. At one place, it refers to the work done by Daṇḍa as to cut, to pierce, to break, to tear and to kill¹⁵⁹, and all these seem to be different kinds of corporal punishment.

Mutilation is referred to many times as a kind of punishment to be inflicted upon the culprits. 'Virūpakaraṇa' or disfiguring, and Vyaṅgatvaṃ¹⁶⁰ or Vyaṅgatā of the body, are the two terms denoting mutilation. It is prescribed for the offence of robbery. Likhita inflicted this punishment upon himself by cutting his hand for the offence of theft. Kautilya¹⁶¹ has enumerated many cases for which this kind of punishment is to be inflicted upon the offenders.

Those offenders were put on pike (Śūli) who were found guilty of theft, as sage Aṇi-Māṇḍavya¹⁶² was punished with this kind of punishment. It was inflicted upon those also who violated the order of the state as the Andhaka Vṛishni administration had declared to inflict this kind of punishment on those who would violate its order of prohibition.¹⁶³

Capital punishment was inflicted upon the offenders who committed crimes of the most serious nature. Those persons were to be killed who committed theft of state's property or gave injuries to the Brāhmaṇas, and even ordinary dacoits also were to be killed.¹⁶⁴ The judges who accepted bribe from the parties also got capital punishment.¹⁶⁵ The epic recommends death penalty to be inflicted upon those who rebel against the state.¹⁶⁶

Other kinds of capital punishment also have been mentioned in the epic as it instructs the king to kill the woman in the open field by provoking the dogs to bit her if she discards

159. Ibid. 121.18.

160. Ibid. 259.133, 122.41, 160.69.

161. K.A. 4.10-11.

162. Adi. 57.77, 101.2-12.

163. Mausala. 2.18-20.

164. Virāṭa. 4.42, 6.13 ; ŚP. 259.3 respectively.

165. Aśrama. 10.2-4.

166. ŚP. 37.5.

her husband and goes to other person for sexual enjoyment, and to burn such persons to death who discard their own wives and enjoy the wives of others.¹⁶⁷

Chitrabadham as referred to by the epic seems to be a kind of death penalty.¹⁶⁸ Kautilya has explained¹⁶⁹ this term. He refers to the Suddhbadha and Chitrabadha in the sense of killing the criminals without giving torture, and giving torture to them respectively. While inflicting punishment upon the culprits, the epic instructs the king not to inflict death penalty for light offences,¹⁷⁰ and to exempt the Brāhmaṇas altogether from it.¹⁷¹

Death penalty is the most serious type of punishment which ends the life of the persons on whom it is inflicted. It has been condemned by many thinkers. The question arises as to what was the idea of the theorists of the Mahābhārata in this regard? The dialogue between king Dyumatsena and prince Satyavān¹⁷² throws interesting light on this problem. The prince thinks that death penalty should not be inflicted upon the robbers and dacoits, and they must be persuaded to become good citizens. In his view, it causes sufferings to many persons who are dependents of persons on whom this punishment is inflicted. He pleads that forgiveness should be given to the culprits who promise before the priest not to commit crimes in future.¹⁷³

In response to the arguments advanced by his son, the king places very logical points to prove the justification of capital punishment to be inflicted upon the dacoits. He says that in former ages, when the people were truthful and soft hearted, the punishment of gentle admonition was enough and

167. Ibid. 159.59-61.

168. Ibid. 86, 21.

169. K.A. 4.11.

170. ŚP. 160.69.

171. Ibid. Ch. 259.

172. Ibid.

173. Ibid. 259.1-15.

the vocal remonstrances sufficed, but in the later ages corporal punishment and death sentence have to be resorted to in order to control the robbers, who create troubles in the way of smooth running of society.¹⁷⁴

Satyavān rejects the view of his father discarding the violent means for the regulation of social order. He argues that robbery should be eliminated and robbers should be persuaded to follow other professions, beneficial to them in the next world also.¹⁷⁵ Dyumatsena says that good kings feel ashamed when they see the existence of evil-doers in their kingdoms; so they should try to reform their subjects in a manner that the evil-doers may not be able to do any harm to them.¹⁷⁶ He, further, says that the king does not kill the robbers due to his own sweet-will, but does so in order to threaten others for following the good path.¹⁷⁷

Imprisonment also may be included in the list of corporal punishment, as the offenders in jails are forced to do hard work and are physically tortured. This kind of punishment has been recommended for those who commit theft.¹⁷⁸ Vidura is referred to as having released many persons from the jails.¹⁷⁹

The Mahābhārata mentions the non-corporal punishment as well such as the Dhigdāṇḍa and Vāgdāṇḍa.¹⁸⁰ The first takes the form of saying, "You have not done a proper thing"; it is the gentle admonition. The second is stronger in nature than the former which may take the form, "Fie upon you"; this is a punishment by severe re-proof. Vāchādāṇḍa¹⁸¹ has

174. Ibid. 259.18-22.

175. Ibid. 259.23.

176. Ibid. 259.24.

177. Ibid. 259.25.

178. Virāṭa. 4.42; ŚP. 259.13.

179. ŚP. 86.19.

180. Ibid. 259.19.

181. Ibid. 15.9.

been prescribed for the Brāhmaṇas and Durvācānigraha daṇḍa¹⁸², or the use of the harsh words also has been considered as a kind of Daṇḍa.

Hiranya-daṇḍa or the imposition of fines is the easiest means of punishment. It increases the Kosha of the king and restrains the person from committing offences. The epic instructs the king to impose this kind of punishment on those who do not follow the law.¹⁸³ Though the imposition of fine is prescribed for the offender of all Varṇas, yet it is especially to be imposed upon the Vaiśyas as they earn more wealth. At one place the epic informs that fine should be imposed upon those who do not observe the Daśadharmā¹⁸⁴ or the ten rules of morality, but it does not refer to them. Perhaps these are the Daśāparadha as referred to by Nārada.¹⁸⁵ Kautilya and Manu give a very exhaustive list of fines to be imposed upon different types of offenders but the epic does not go into details and never mentions the amounts to be imposed upon different grades of offenders.

Deprivation of property also was a kind of punishment which is specially prescribed for the Vaiśyas,¹⁸⁶ and for the offenders who commit theft.¹⁸⁷ The epic exempts the Brāhmaṇas from this kind of punishment.

Banishment¹⁸⁸ from the country also was a kind of punishment which was inflicted upon those who rebelled against the state. For the Brāhmaṇas, it was the most insulting kind of punishment.¹⁸⁹ King Sagara is referred to as having ex-

182. Ibid. 160.68.

183. Āśrama. 10.2-4.

184. ŚP. 15.9.

185. Kane, P. V., op.cit., p. 264.

186. ŚP. 15.9, 86.19, 259.20.

187. Ibid. 259.13.

188. Ibid. 122.41.

189. Ibid. 56.31-33, 77.12-14.

pelled his son for the offence of murdering the boys of Ayodhā. King Janaka of Mithilā also had expelled a Brāhmaṇa from his state on account of some offence committed by him. King Virāṭa of the Matsya country threatened the Brāhmaṇas that they would be expelled from his country, if they inflict any injury to Kaṅka (Yudhishtira).¹⁹⁰

190. Ibid. 57.8-9 ; Aśvamedhika. 32.2 ; Virāṭa. 6.13 respectively.

Chapter X

REVENUE SYSTEM

The Kosha is an element of supreme importance in the body politic as all its undertakings ultimately depend upon finance.¹ Kauṭilya and Kāmandaka have also expressed similar view.² The epic asserts that Kosha is the root for the existence of the king as he can protect his state and make the people happy with its help.³ So, on account of these reasons, he has to look after the financial affairs personally.⁴

The theorists of the epic advance arguments regarding the importance of Kosha. The ultimate duty of the king is to protect the people from external aggressions and internal dangers. But he cannot protect them without the help of army, and that cannot be maintained for want of finance.⁵ So, ultimately, the defence of the country is based upon sound financial position. This dictum of the epic is similar to the view of Piśuna⁶, who regards the Kosha of greater importance than fort on various grounds. Kauṭilya⁷ has also considered it as more important than the army as it is supported with the help of finance and it goes to other king or kills its own master, if not paid regularly. The exhaustion of the Kosha causes deterioration in the strength of the army and a king having weak army cannot protect the state⁸ as king Suvarchas and prince Saṅjaya⁹ could not protect their

1. ŚP. 15.48.

2. K.A. 2.8 ; Kāmandaka, 13.33.

3. ŚP. 119.16.

4. Ibid. 87.20.

5. Ibid. 128.35.

6. K.A. 8.1.

7. Ibid.

8. ŚP. 128.11.

9. Aśvamedhika, 4.9-13 ; Udyoga. Ch. 134.

states for want of finance. The former was a religious king and exhausted his Kosha for the performance of sacrifices. On all these accounts, the epic regards enriching the treasury as one of the means for the protection of the kingdom.¹⁰ Sage Kālakavrikshiya had advised king Kshemadarśin to accumulate more wealth as "Koshakshaya" forces the king to surrender himself to the foe.¹¹

The state stands for the welfare works of the people. But is it possible without the help of finance?¹² The works of social, economic and religious progress of the people cannot be performed without it, hence, for all these works Kosha is essential.

The Kosha is closely related to Dharma as Satya and Dharma are followed with the help of finance. Yajñas can be performed and desires may be fulfilled with its help.¹³ Kautīlya also advances the same view that it is the chief means of observing virtuous acts.¹⁴

The Kosha helps the king to come out of difficulties.¹⁵ The most critical situation arises on the occasion of invasion by a powerful king, who wants to humble him after giving a crushing defeat. Sometimes, the superior and powerful king endangers the life of a weaker king, and on this occasion the Kosha protects his life when he surrenders it to him.¹⁶ Besides this, the calamities caused by the natural elements and divine disgrace like flood, conflagration and epidemics can be eradicated with its help.

The honour and respect of the king also depend upon it. A king is not respected even by his own subjects when he is

10. ŚP. 58.8 ; Aśrama. 11.8.

11. ŚP. 106.16-18.

12. Aranyaka. 149.31-32, 198.23.

13. ŚP. 128.43, 128.49.

14. K.A. 8.1.

15. ŚP. 128.49.

16. Ibid. 129.6-8.

in paucity of financial resources.¹⁷ Such kings are always insulted by superior and powerful kings, who force them to offer tributes to them as token of the acceptance of their sovereignty. They place insulting terms of alliance. So, forgetting respect and honour, he should try to increase his Kosha and strengthen his financial position.

The importance of Kosha lies in the fact that it conceals the sins committed by kings¹⁸, and even persons previously insulted by him serve him like dogs in expectation of getting wealth from him.¹⁹ The critics of king are silenced with the help of wealth. The sins committed by him are removed by performing sacrifices, but these are also performed with the help of wealth.

Basis of Taxation

The social contract theory of the origin of state shows that in the remote past the king had agreed to protect the people, and in lieu of that, the latter promised to offer some portions of their economic products to him. Later on, it developed into the idea that king is the servant of the people, who receives his salary in the form of taxes. This doctrine of relation of taxation to protection is clearly advanced by Gautama and Baudhāyana.²⁰ Kautīlya Arthaśāstra and the Rāmāyaṇa also furnish the same²¹ information. The epic mentions that the king should realise one sixth from the subjects, but that should be spent for their protection, otherwise he gets 1/4th of the sin committed by them.²² It declares

17. Ibid. 131.6.

18. Ibid. 131.8.

19. Ibid.

20. GDS. 10.28 ; BDS. 1.10.18.1.

21. K.A. 1.12 ; V. R. Ayodhyā. 75.25 ; Aranyaka. 6.11 ; V. R.

Uttara. 74.32.

22. Śp. 69.24, 25.12.

such kings as robbers who realise taxes, and do not protect the subjects, and spend the amount for their personal pleasures.²³ This idea is further supported by Manu.²⁴ Further, the epic instructs the kings to perform welfare works for the subjects because they realise taxes from them,²⁵ and this actually forms the basis of taxation.²⁶

Positively, the above idea of taxation has been emphasised in the epic which entitles the subjects to claim the refund of wages in proportion to the loss of the property, even stolen away by the thieves.²⁷ It supports the view of the abandonment of the king who does not protect. The tie of allegiance is deemed dissolved, the moment the king fails to fulfil his duty, and the subjects are then free to employ another servant-king instead.²⁸

Principles of Taxation

Kosha is the root of the state and taxes are the wages of the king in lieu of the services rendered by him to the people. But, the question arises whether he is entitled to act according to his own sweet-will for enriching his Kosha. The Mahābhārata furnishes some principles to be followed by him in the matters of taxation which may save the people from destruction and further enrich the Kosha.

The epic advances the principle of returning benefit to be followed by the king. It presents some similies in order to clarify this point, such as the Sun draws water from the earth through its rays, and returns the same in the form of the rain for the benefit of the people, so the king realising

23. Ibid. 137.96-97.

24. Manu. 7.307-308.

25. ŚP. 72.11.

26. See Jha, D. N., Revenue System in Post-Mauryan and Gupta Times, p. 18.

27. ŚP. 76.9-10.

28. Jayaswal, K. P., HP, pp. 321-322.

taxes from his subjects, should utilise them for their welfare, and for the multiplication of the amount realised by him.²⁹ Manu and Kālidāsa also hold the same view.³⁰

The king is allowed to realise only the fixed amount of taxes. Fixing up of taxes did not lie in the discretion of the sovereigns. They had been fixed by the Law and the scales had been embodied in the Sacred common Law with the result that the matter of taxation did not become an object of the ruler's caprice. The epic states that the avaricious king who foolishly oppresses his subjects by imposing taxes, not sanctioned by the Śāstras, is said to wrong his ownself, and such a king neither gains the Dharma nor the Artha.³¹ Manu also advises the king to follow the injunctions of the Śāstras in this respect.³² There are some epigraphic evidences to show that during the compositional period of the Mahābhārata kings realised taxes as sanctioned by the Śāstras such as Gautamīputra had levied taxes in accordance with the sacred Law.³³ The epic instructs the king to punish those officers who realise more than fixed rates of taxes.³⁴

The rates of taxes should be reasonable so that the people may not suffer.³⁵ The realisation of high rated taxes results in the migration of the people, so the king must not destroy the sources of income, and such a king gets nothing, but enmity and hatred.³⁶ If the calf is permitted to suck, it grows strong and can bear heavy weight, so a prosperous people can bear the burden of the state, hence they must not be exploited. Over-milching also weakens the calf, and

29. Aranyaka. 34.69.

30. Manu. 9.305 ; Raghuvamśa. 1.18.

31. ŚP. 72.14-15.

32. Manu. 7.80.

33. E.I., Vol. 8, p. 60.

34. ŚP. 89.22.

35. Ibid. 28.56.

36. Aranyaka. 188.61-62 ; ŚP. 88.16-17.

consequently it harms the milcher.³⁷ So, the king does not prosper, but declines, who realises high rated taxes from the subjects, because people who bear the brunt of heavy taxes, do not remain loyal to him.³⁸ Realisation of reasonable taxes has been well illustrated by the similies of the cow, gardener and the coal-maker.³⁹ As the cow does not yield milk when harassed by the milcher, likewise, the king does not prosper, who realises high rated taxes from his subjects by harassing them. He should act like gardener, who plucks only the blossomed flowers, and must not act like a coal-maker, who for the sake of wealth burns the plants, but gets nothing in comparison with the gardener. As the satisfied, well nourished, and pleasant mothers yield more milk to children, similarly the earth when well protected and nourished, gives more wealth to the king.⁴⁰ Manu also presents the similies of the leech, the calf and the bee, and advises the king to realise little by little for a long time.⁴¹

In the matters of levying taxes, the king has been advised to act tactfully after examining the income and expenditure of the subjects. As the persons draw juice from the full grown trees, and not from a young one, even so he should take care as to how the taxes should be imposed upon the subjects. Protection and prosperity of the people are the end of the state, so while imposing taxes on them he should keep this thing in view. During drought and famine, he is required not to realise taxes from them. These should be imposed only on those, who are able to bear the burden, but it should be done with conciliation.⁴² He should impose taxes according to the time and place factors.⁴³ As a man cannot control

37. ŚP. 88.18ff.

38. Ibid. 137.105.

39. Ibid. 72.17-20.

40. Ibid. 72.19.

41. Manu. 7.129, 139.

42. ŚP. 72.21.

43. Ibid. 89.11.

a bad horse by adopting improper methods, so the improper methods of imposing taxes also make the subjects furious.⁴⁴

While imposing taxes on the agriculturists, he should find out whether they are content or not or whether they intend to migrate, fearing heavy burden of taxes.⁴⁵ He should impose taxes on the merchants keeping in view the sale, expense on supply, salary of the servants and the benefit gained by them. When the merchants are suppressed by heavy amount of taxes,⁴⁶ they cease to carry on their business and thereby cause serious financial loss to the national exchequer and bring many inconveniences to the people.

The artisans also contribute their share to the prosperity of the state. While imposing taxes on the artisans the king should take into account, the products of art and crafts, the material used, cost incurred, maintenance of the artisans, wealth required for producing the articles and their financial positions.⁴⁷ The epic instructs the king to impose taxes on the industrial products after determining the out-turn and the amount of labour necessary for production, because without proper incentives, no body would like to engage himself in industry.⁴⁸ Manu also advances the same view for imposing taxes on them.⁴⁹

Owing to the financial crisis, or on account of some other reasons, the state is sometimes forced to increase the rate of taxes. The Mbh. mentions that kings should act in this matter, keeping in view the prosperity of the people, and the positions of the Kosha.⁵⁰ But so far the process of increasing the rate of taxes is concerned, the epic suggests that there should not be sudden increase in the rate of taxation rather

44. Ibid. 89.12.

45. Ibid. 90.23-25.

46. Ibid. 90.21.22.

47. Ibid. 88.12.

48. Ibid. 88.13-14.

49. Manu. 7.127.

50. ŚP. 89.1-3.

the king should adopt the method of gradual increase, and that also should be done little by little.⁵¹ The taxes should be of low rates, but gradually they may be increased slowly and sweetly till a fair proportion⁵² is achieved. This is necessary if the king wishes to avoid mass opposition.

Realisation of taxes is equally important. The king should adopt various methods for realising them successfully for the enrichment of his Kosha. But what steps should be adopted by him? Should he be too mild or too harsh? In the former case, the subjects do not like to pay the taxes easily, whereas in the latter case, they suffer more at the hands of the king. What should be proper method? The king should always adopt just and proper methods for realising the taxes.⁵³ Bhishma, while enumerating the means for the longer duration of the state, advances the view that these are possible only with the help of proper realisational taxes (Yuktyādānam).⁵⁴ The king who wants to realise the taxes being motivated by Kāma and Krodha, is a fool, and obtains neither the Dharma nor the Artha.⁵⁵ It declares that as the persons are destroyed by not following the injunctions of the Śāstras, similarly, the king perishes very soon, who violates the rules relating to the realisation of taxes, and accumulates wealth by adopting improper means.⁵⁶ So, he should always adopt the policy of conciliation.

For the guidance of the king, the epic presents some similies. As the bees take flower-juice without doing harm to the flowers, similarly, he should realise taxes from the subjects without harming them.⁵⁷ The realm is like a cow hence it must not be over-milched. As the person desirous of milk

51. Ibid. 89.6.

52. Ibid. 89.7-8.

53. Aśrama. 10.9, 33.3.

54. ŚP. 58.5, 71.1-3.

55. Ibid. 72.7.

56. Ibid. 72.13-14.

57. Udyoga. 34.17; ŚP. 120.32.

does not obtain it by cutting the udders of the cow, similarly, a kingdom afflicted by improper means never yields any profit to him.⁵⁸ There should be no injury to the subjects. As the bee and calf draw juice and milk slowly without giving injuries to the flowers and the cow respectively, so he also should not adopt oppressive measures for the realisation of taxes.⁵⁹ He should act like the leech and realise taxes very slowly without harming them. As the tigress carries its children having their necks in its mouth, but without giving injuries to them, so the king should realise taxes from the people without doing any harm to them.⁶⁰

The king should adopt very mild methods for the realisation of taxes from the subjects and must never fall on them like the thunder.⁶¹ The epic sums up the view of Manu by stating that Daṇḍa has been offered to the Kshatriyas for the protection of the people and not for realising the wealth. Realisation of taxes with the help of Daṇḍa is actually its secondary aspect and the king cannot use it as he likes.⁶² But what could be the result, if he does not follow these rules? As the priest insults his degraded Yajamānas, and well characterised wife insults her impotent and characterless husband, similarly the people also insult the king who does not follow the rules for the realisation of taxes, and adopts very harsh measures⁶³ (Ugraprtigarhitā). The Rāmāyaṇa also furnishes more or less the same informations.⁶⁴ In short, the middle path should be followed by the king because the collection of taxes is not possible by one who is either of mild temperament or by those who are cruel, so the middle-path is the best way to be followed.⁶⁵

58. ŚP. 88.18 ; 120.31.

59. Ibid. 89.4.

60. Ibid. 89.5.

61. Ibid. 120.41-42.

62. Ibid. 122.40.

63. Sabhā. 5.35.

64. V. R., Ayodhyā. 100.28.

65. ŚP. 131.3.

It is the right of the state to compel all its subjects to contribute to the common expenses because it protects all. But the epic like other treatises exempts certain persons and institutions from one or more or from all the taxes to be paid to the national exchequer. Why they should be exempted from paying taxes to the state when they like other persons, get protection from it equally? A perusal of this question shows that the exemptions were accorded for public rather than for private reasons, because exempted persons and institutions really performed the functions which the Govt. could otherwise be called upon to assume.⁶⁶

The Brāhmaṇas, who devoted themselves for the cultivation of spiritual knowledge, and for the spread of different branches of Vidyā, were exempted from paying taxes to the state. Even during crisis period, the state is not allowed to realise taxes from such Brāhmaṇas.⁶⁷ Bhishma is referred to as saying to Yudhishṭhira that it is not very proper to take away the wealth of the Brāhmaṇas even by mistake.⁶⁸ Āpastamba, Gautama, Vaśishṭha, and Kauṭilya⁶⁹ also advance the same view. Such persons were exempted from being taxed and on the other hand, they got the means of subsistence by the state. The epic refers to the Brahmadeya, Agrahāra and Parihāra villages which were offered⁷⁰ to them. In the post-Mauryan inscriptions there are many references to these villages.

The question arises whether all the Brāhmaṇas as a class, are to be exempted from being taxed or a particular section or a few persons? In the scheme of the Mahābhārata, a Brāhmaṇa does not remain so, when he discards the duties

66. Seligman, Studies in Public Finance, pp. 139-140, and quoted by M. N. Gopala, MPF., p. 146.

67. ŚP. 72.21-23.

68. Anuśāsana. 69.1-33.

69. ADS. 2.10.26.10; GDS. 9.9; VDS. 19.23; K.A. 2.1.

70. Aranyaka. 65.3; Aśrama. 16.15, 19.11.

as sanctioned by the Śāstras, hence, he is not entitled to get the concessions.⁷¹

The exemption of the Tāpasas and temples from being taxed has been discussed elsewhere in this work.⁷² Kautilya is of the opinion that materials to be utilised in religious functions like marriage, gifts offered to the public institutions, articles used in the performance of sacrifices, the first hair cutting ceremony, and the cow gifts etc. should be exempted from taxation.⁷³ The epic does not furnish such information in detail but according to it the king should not take wealth from the persons who are engaged in the performance of sacrifices.

Taxation during financial crisis

During normal times, the state is required to follow the rules of taxation, but there are certain occasions which create financial problems, and on account of some reasons treasury is exhausted, and its existence is endangered. But how far the king is required to follow the rules of taxation? The epic mentions that protection of the state is a matter of supreme importance, hence during financial crisis, he is permitted to do every thing for its protection. But what are the methods and means to get wealth? How should he act?

During financial crisis, the state, sometimes invites public loans for raising financial resources for meeting external invasions and also for removing the internal dangers caused either by natural or human forces. On such occasions, the king should tour throughout his kingdom acquainting his subjects with the nature of calamities or distress which are expected to befall or actually prevailing,⁷⁴ within his kingdom.

71. ŚP. 77.5-9.

72. Vide this work, Ch. 4.

73. K.A. 2.21.

74. ŚP. 88.24.

The appeal of the king runs as follows : "To meet this calamity and dreadful danger, I seek your wealth for taking concerted measures for your protection. When the danger passes away, I will repay you what I now take. Our foes however, will not return what they will take from you by force. The wealth is for the protection of the wives and sons, but the wives will fall in dangers, if the country is invaded. As a father is pleased with the prosperity of his son, similarly, I am pleased with your prosperity. I shall borrow the wealth from you according to your capacity, so that the country may not suffer. In this period of distress, you should not conceal your wealth, rather it is your duty to help me adequately.⁷⁵

A Kālavid king should invite public borrowing speaking melodious words in a humble way.⁷⁶ The treatment with them must be very sweet. If the people are harassed, they migrate, and thereby cause loss to the state.⁷⁷ Kautīlya is also of the opinion that the king should invite Public-loans during the time of financial crisis or urgency but he should repay the borrowed amount to them.⁷⁸

The epic does not refer to the loans to be taken from other states, but at many places it shows that the duty of an ally is to help his counterpart in distress by offering military or other types of assistance. If the military assistance was accepted and asked for, then it is possible that the kings, during financial crisis, may also ask for monetary assistance.

The king is entitled to raise financial resources to maintain the Brāhmaṇas. He is their protector and supporter, but when the Brāhmaṇas find it difficult to maintain themselves due to the activities of robbers and dacoits, and the king is himself unable to support them with the wealth from his Kosha, in that case, the king may confiscate the wealth of

75. Ibid. 88.25-29.

76. Ibid. 88.32.

77. Ibid. 88.33-34, 37.

78. K.A. 9.4.

those who are wicked and impious. He should regard the wealth of the wealthy ones as his own, and is entitled to confiscate it forcibly for the maintenance of the Brāhmaṇas⁷⁹.

For the enrichment of treasury during financial crisis, the epic instructs the king to confiscate the wealth of those persons who do not perform sacrifices⁸⁰. It advances the theory that all things belong to the king and are to be enjoyed by him. He can do so either to finance the war or for performing the sacrifices⁸¹. The epic presents contradictory views. At one place it has been suggested that king is not entitled to occupy the wealth of other persons or realise the same by harassing them.⁸² It is not necessary to clarify the above point because the Mahābhārata represents the views of different persons of different ages.

The question may be asked whether the king is entitled to violate the established rules of taxation during financial crisis? During normal times, he should try to enrich his Kosha by following the established rules of taxation, but during the period of distress, he is not bound to follow them: The reason being that the Dharma of a person differs in a particular situation from what it is in another situation.⁸³ The king is, therefore, entitled to enrich his Kosha during financial crisis by hook or crook, even by violating the rules of taxation.⁸⁴

During the period of crisis, the king is entitled to realise wealth from the subject excepting the Brāhmaṇas and the Tāpasas. As the Brāhmaṇa is entitled to adopt the professions of other Varnas, particularly of the Kshatriyas during the period of crisis, so the king is also permitted by

79. SP. 129.5.

80. Ibid. 134.1-2.

81. Ibid. 134.3-4.

82. Anusasana (G.P.), 61.21-23.

83. SP. 128.13-14.

84. Ibid. 128.13-14.

the Śāstras to discard his Dharma, and has been allowed to do anything even by violating the rules of taxation during the emergency period. He may adopt any method or may take any step to protect the state, when there is possibility of decline from all sides⁸⁵. He should realise wealth from rich persons⁸⁶. But does it mean that during emergency, he may act according to his own sweet will? The epic reminds him to be reasonable even during the crisis period, and instructs him to realise wealth while protecting them⁸⁷.

It is true that the subjects do not like to offer wealth voluntarily to the king. Therefore, during emergency period, what he has to do? Should he adopt harsh measures to realise wealth? It cannot be obtained without harassing them, and it is very difficult to maintain the army for the national defence without wealth. So, by harassing the subjects he should realise wealth during emergency for the national defence⁸⁸. The above point has been further clarified by suggesting that as many things which are not to be done, are performed in connection with the performance of sacrifices, and these are not regarded as deeds causing sin, similarly, the king also does not commit sin if he harasses the subjects for the realisation of wealth for the country's defence⁸⁹.

There is the possibility of committing Himsā or violence if the king adopts illegal means for the realisation of wealth. Is it proper? It has been argued that, there is no one whose means of livelihood is free from the acts of Himsā or violence. Even the sages also commit it. Besides this, no one can maintain himself only with the help of the

85. SP. 128.20-23.

86. Ibid. 128.25-26.

87. Ibid. 128.27.

88. Ibid. 128.36.

89. Ibid. 128.27.

fate; and specially the king cannot depend upon it, as he has taken the responsibility of protecting the people, hence, if he commits Himsā for realising wealth, then there is nothing objectionable in it, and thereby, he does not even commit sin⁹⁰.

The justification of Himsā is clarified with the help of a simile. The Yajña is performed for a specific purpose, but there are many other related works which are to be performed along with it. The king's duty is to protect the state, but, he is also required to do other things also for protecting his people. Wealth is one of the means, which ensures the protection of the state, so during emergency, it may be realised by adopting any means.⁹¹ In this way, the king may commit Himsā but it does not matter. The epic is in favour of destroying all those who cause hindrance to the king in his way of realising wealth during the period of crisis. This is further justified with the help of another simile. A large tree is cut down for making a sacrificial pillar, but in the process of cutting other trees stand in its way, they have also to be cut down; likewise, those persons also must be killed who stand in the way of filling the treasury⁹² with coffers. In short, it recommends to adopt all kinds of steps for the accumulation of wealth, and there is no sin even in committing Himsā⁹³ for realising the wealth.

Kauṭilya⁹⁴ also has elaborately discussed this point. He has indicated various methods for realising wealth during critical times. The king may, according to Kauṭilya, resort to forgery, and even murder for realising the wealth and taxes. The epic does not enumerate the steps to be

90. SP. 128.27-29.

91. Ibid. 128.39.

92. Ibid. 128.40-42.

93. Ibid. 128.43-44.

94. K.A. 5.2.

taken by the state, but it also, in a way advances the same view as suggested by Kauṭilya, that the state should take all the measures for realising wealth during the financial crisis⁹⁵, although the above measures may not conform to moral or ethical principles. The protection of the state however is of supreme importance.

Some scholars have criticised the emergency rules of taxation that the, "works on law and polity which elaborate sound rules of taxation took a dangerous move when they proceeded to lay down special rules for emergency. Now, in all ages, and in all times, the doctrine of necessity has overlept its bounds and become a convenient euphemism of tyranny and avidity⁹⁶". This criticism does not hold good. A perusal of the emergency rules shows that those are formulated only for the emergency period when the nation is in danger. The protection of the state is of supreme importance and it cannot be neglected at any cost because the safety of individual depends upon the safety of state. But, this also is not without grounds and justification. The people were acquainted with the prevailing critical situation, and thereafter, the wealth was realised from them. So, there is nothing dangerous when the works on the law and polity formulate elaborate sound rules of taxation for the emergency period.⁹⁷

Sources of income :

The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya⁹⁸ refers to different sources of income to the state in detail, but the Mahābhārata does not discuss this matter in such a manner. At one place, there is reference to Bali, Shadbhāg, Śulka and fines as the

95. SP: 128.43-44.

96. Bose, A. N., SRENI, Vol. 1, p. 138.

97. See Jha, D. N., op.cit., pp. 111-112.

98. K. A. 2.6.

sources of income to the state.⁹⁹ At another place, it mentions the *Ashta-karmāṇi*¹⁰⁰ to be undertaken by the state for the enrichment of the treasury. The latter works inform us that *Ashtakarmāṇi* consist of agriculture, trade and commerce, establishment of cities, irrigation, forests of elephants, mines, realisation of taxes and the populated and unpopulated tracts.¹⁰¹ The epic instructs the king to exploit the foreign countries for enriching in Kosha, in much the same way as the persons pluck and collect flowers from the forests besides their own gardens.¹⁰²

The means of *Arthasiddhi* also are the sources of income, and these help the king in enriching his treasury. According to the view of *Vṛihaspati* as quoted by the epic, there are four types of means for *Arthasiddhi* such as the hereditary wealth, wealth obtained by luck, wealth obtained by desire and efforts, and lastly the wealth given by friends. The kings had to do all these things and utilise all these sources for the enrichment of the treasury.¹⁰³

Agriculture was one of the most important sources of income to the state. The king realised different types of taxes from the agriculturists, namely the *Shabhdāga*.¹⁰⁴ and *Bali*.

The *Shadbhāga* or its short form the *Bhāga* are usually referred to as agricultural tax by other works like the *Jātakas*¹⁰⁵, the *Arthaśāstra*¹⁰⁶ of *Kauṭilya*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*¹⁰⁷ and the *Manusmṛiti*¹⁰⁸. The epic, while referring

99. SP. 72.10.

100. Sabha. 5.12.

101. Mbh. (G.P.), Bhaga, 1, p. 677, F. No. 4.

102. SP. 120.11, 131.1.

103. Ibid. 164:12.

104. Ibid. 25.12, 72.10 ; Anusasana, 131.37.

105. For details see Altekar, S.A. ; SGAI, pp. 271-272.

106. K.A. 26.

107. VR. Ayodhya 75.25 ; Aranyaka. 5.14.

108. Manu. 7.130

to this tax, refers to the share of king in agricultural products being $\frac{1}{6}$ th, as the term Shadbhāga itself denotes. Some time it was $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the products and sometimes $\frac{1}{10}$ th also. The people had promised to offer $\frac{1}{10}$ th of their agricultural products to Manu¹⁰⁹. At one place, the epic informs us that the king should feel satisfied by realising $\frac{1}{10}$ th or even less than this share in agricultural products.¹¹⁰ Thus it is clear, that the rate of Bhāga is not fixed and it ranged from $\frac{1}{4}$ th to $\frac{1}{10}$ th. The epigraphic evidences belonging to the compositional period of the epic reveal that it lay in the king's discretion to increase or reduce the rate of taxes. Aśoka had reduced this rate up to the $\frac{1}{8}$ th in the Lumbini¹¹¹ area of the present Nepal Terai. The epic instructs the king not to impose high rated taxes on agriculturists. It seems that the Bhāga differed from time to time and place to place, and it depended much upon the nature of the soil. Manu recommends $\frac{1}{6}$ th, $\frac{1}{8}$ th and $\frac{1}{12}$ th of the agricultural produce as the king's share.¹¹²

It may be enquired whether the Bhāga was realised on gross or net produce. The epic does not refer to it but from other works it is known that it was realised on the gross produce, and the king fixed the rate, keeping in view the fertility of the soil and the condition of the crops.¹¹³

It is also to be known whether the dues were collected in kind or cash? The evidences are in favour of the Bhāga to be paid in kind. The term Bhāga itself indicates that it was paid as part of what was actually produced on the fields.

The question remains to be answered whether the Bhāga

109. SP. 67.23.7.

110. Ibid. 308.158.

111. Sircar, D.C., SI. p. 67.

112. Manu. 7.130.

113. Altekar, A.S., SGAI, p. 271.

was realised on annual or six monthly basis? The Mahābhārata does not furnish any information in this regard, but it may be assumed that it was realised in two instalments, i.e. when the autumn and spring crops were garnered¹¹⁴.

Another tax to be realised from the agriculturists was Bali, but its exact nature cannot be ascertained on the basis of the evidences supplied by the epic. At one place, it has been stated that Bali was to be realised from those Brāhmaṇas who did not follow their duties as sanctioned by the scriptures¹¹⁵. At another place, it has been referred to as being realised from the defeated kings¹¹⁶. It is to be realised from the subjects of the king and has been considered as a source for the enrichment of the treasury¹¹⁷. It has been mentioned that king Yudhishthira had realised Bali from his subjects¹¹⁸.

In the R̥gveda also, this term has been used in the sense of tax. The scholars interpret it as a voluntary offering by the subjects to the king. A passage of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa shows that the above term denoted portions of duly consecrated food assigned to all the creatures¹¹⁹. Pāṇini and Manu also refer to this term but the meaning is not clear¹²⁰. So, in the present state of our knowledge, it is very difficult to draw any conclusion regarding the exact nature of Bali. Therefore, it is better to say that sometime it denotes voluntary tax offered by the subjects to the king, and sometimes, it is the tax realised by the victors or the superior kings from the defeated or sub-ordinate kings.

114. Ibid. op.cit. p. 273.

115. SP. 77.7.

116. Ibid. 96.2-3.

117. Ibid. 69.24, 77.9, 137.96.

118. Sabha. 30.2.

119. Sat. Br. 2.3.1.11.

120. Ashtadhyayi. 3.1.36. ; Manu. 3.108, 265.

In the inscriptions, as well as in many literary works belonging to the compositional period of the epic there are references to many other agricultural taxes, but the epic merely refers to Bali and Bhāga.

The cattle also were the source of income to the treasury of state. The people are reported to as promising to offer 2% of their cattle to Manu, the first king, as his share in the cattle-wealth¹²¹. This rate of cattle-tax is also referred to by Manu¹²². The epic does not enlighten us whether the king realised 2% of the total number of the cattle or some percentage of the price of the cattle which were sold to others?

The Mahābhārata refers to the imposition of taxes on the artisans, keeping in view their labour and out-put, but it does not refer to the specific types of taxes to be realised from them¹²³.

Manu¹²⁴ informs us that petty artisans like smiths and carpenters should work one day in a month for the state, but this information is not supplied by the epic. It is also not clear whether the artisans paid their taxes in cash or in labour. It may, therefore, be assumed that the central government transferred the power to receive the labour tax to the local bodies, which could utilise it in carrying out their schemes of works of public utility¹²⁵. But, what was the case with the artisans, who professed non-manual works, like weavers and gold-smiths? Perhaps, they paid taxes in cash or worked in the state's workshop for one day in a month.

Trade and commerce also were the source of income to

121. SP. 67.23.

122. Manu. 7.130.

123. SP. 88.12-14.

124. Manu. 7.138.

125. Altekar. A. S. op.cit. p. 280.

the state. The epic frequently refers to Śulka¹²⁶ and merchants, and it instructs the king to appoint efficient and honest persons as the Officers-in-charge of the posts relating to the affairs of Śulka. They should be ordered to realise the proper rates of Śulka¹²⁷. The sea-merchants¹²⁸ are rarely referred to but there is no mention of the custom. The term 'Kara'¹²⁹ also is referred to as a kind of tax to be realised from the merchants.

The terms Śulka and Bhāga are very vague, and do not clarify the point as to the types of trade and commerce on which these are to be imposed, and the rate of these taxes on different merchantile commodities are unknown. The Arthaśāstra, Manusmṛiti and other works enlighten us on this point¹³⁰. One thing is apparent that according to the theorists of the epic the merchants must not be heavily taxed¹³¹.

In this connection ferry tax must be mentioned which is termed as 'Tara'¹³². It was also a source of income to the state and honest persons were appointed to collect ferry taxes, but the rates are not mentioned, as we find in the Arthaśāstra¹³³ of Kauṭilya.

Viśṭi or forced labour was fairly common in ancient India, and the state usually utilised its right to the free service as and when occasions demanded. Under this category, Kauṭilya¹³⁴ includes sweepers, preservers, slaves and labourers. The epic refers to it as a tax to be realised even from the degraded Brāhmaṇas, who do not follow their

126. SP. 72.10.

127. Ibid. 69.28 ; Sabha. 5.103.

128. SP. 163.1-2.

129. Ibid. 90.22.

130. K.A. 2.22 ; Manu. 7.131-132.

131. SP. 88.11, 90.22.

132. Ibid. 69.28.

133. K.A. 2.28.

134. Ibid. 2.15.

duty assanctioned by the Śāstras¹³⁵ There were other persons also, who although got protection from the state, but being unable to pay any other taxes, had something to pay in lieu of it. It was offered by them in the form of free service to the state. These persons worked in the workshops run by the state and their services were further utilised on the occasions of the visits by the king or the state's officials on certain occasions for erecting tents and rendering other services to them. Perhaps the local bodies also were authorised to utilise the Vishti for carrying out works of public utility. The epic does not refer to the period of the service offered by them to the state. According to Manu¹³⁶, it was for one day in a month. Gautama¹³⁷ is of the opinion that during servicing period, the state should offer food to persons offering Vishti to it, but the epic is silent on this point. It seems that it was an oppressive tax, as those persons also were required to pay it, who possessed nothing, and were not engaged in productive activities. But the utilisation of Vishti may be justified as the state protected all the person and as such, they must pay something to it, and they can pay in the form of free labour. This was applicable to those who possessed nothing and lived from hand to mouth.

It may be asked whether the taxes were reasonable or not? It is to be noted that excepting Bhāga and cattle-tax, the epic does not specify the rates of taxes on other things, so it is difficult to say anything whether the rate was reasonable or not. In comparison with the present rates, the agricultural rates as sanctioned by the Mahābhārata are very high, as now-a-days 1/4th or 1/6th or 1/10th is considered to be very heavy. But for this, the epic alone cannot be blamed as other works also fix the same rates.

135. SP. 77.7.

136. Manu. 7.138.

137. GDS. 2 1.35.

Besides realising taxes from the subjects, the state did something to enrich the treasury by starting undertakings in public sector. There were many other sources though not related directly to it, which contributed to the enrichment of the treasury.

It seems that the state had its own agricultural fields on which different types of crops were harvested. Kauṭilya refers to the crown-land by the technical term 'Sītā' which was under the supervision of the Sītādhyaksha¹³⁸. The epic does not mention any such terms, and there is no references to the state's undertakings in the agricultural sectors, except a solitary reference which shows that the state had its own agricultural farms. Nārada wants to know from Yudhishtira about his Kṛishitaṁtra¹³⁹. A description of the Kṛishitaṁtra of Yudhishtira by Nārada shows that the state owned its gardens of roots, fruits and flowers, and the Brāhmaṇas received these things from the king¹⁴⁰. Kauṭilya, while discussing the duties of the Sītādhyaksha says that the Śrotriyas and Tāpasas should be allowed to take fruits and flowers from the gardens¹⁴¹. Though the epic does not inform whether the things produced in the state's gardens fetched money or not, yet it may be assumed that perhaps those gardens were auctioned to others in the seasons of fruits and flowers. There are historical references to corroborate that the state had its own gardens of fruits and flowers, as some of the Aśoka's¹⁴² inscriptions inform us about the same.

The state had its own cattle-wealth, and had established dairy farms, where the cattle were reared. Kauṭilya¹⁴³

138. K.A. 2.24.

139. Sabha. 5.106.

140. Ibid.

141. K.A. 2.24.

142. R.E. 2nd.

143. K.A. 2.29.

Arthaśāstra furnishes details regarding the state's dairy farms but the references furnished by the epic are very scanty in comparison with those supplied by the former work. The state had realised the importance of cattle, and therefore, it gave more attention to their welfare. Virāṭa¹⁴⁴ possessed one lakh of cow, and Yudhisṭhira¹⁴⁵ had eight lakhs of the Vargas, each containing 100 of cows. These numbers may be fantastic, but it is apparent that the state possessed its own cattle-wealth. The epic describes the visit by Duryodhana¹⁴⁶ to his Ghosha in the Dvaita Vana, and in this connection, many technical terms have been referred to which are the same as mentioned by Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra¹⁴⁷.

The epic does not refer to the industrial undertakings by the state but there are references to show that it had established its own workshops in which many articles were manufactured. It offered raw materials to the artisans which lasted for four months. Those artisans were employed by the state and they were provided with all the necessary provisions.¹⁴⁸ The persons, working in the workshops of state, got adequate wages.

Mining was an industry which caused prosperity to the state, hence Bhīṣma had advised Yudhisṭhira to appoint honest and trustworthy persons to the posts related to the mines.¹⁴⁹ Particular types of mines are not referred to, but, it may be assumed that these were of iron, gold, copper, silver and of other metals. It seems that salt industry was under the state's monopoly, so Bhīṣma advised Yudhisṭhira to appoint efficient and honest persons

144. Virata. 9.14.

145. Ibid. 9.8.

146. Aranyaka. 227.19-20, 228.2.

147. K.A. 2.29.

148. Sabha. 5.106.

149. SP. 69 28.

to the posts concerning this industry.¹⁵⁰ Salt was explored from the mines or was artificially prepared. In our country, the salt-duty is an old item of public revenue, and the principle on which the duty is levied, is that, if all the masses are to contribute to the public purse, it must be largely through the taxes levied upon articles of universal consumption.¹⁵¹ Salt was a source of income to the state in two-fold, its manufacturers had to take licence from the state and had to give excise duty. Revenue was derived from custom duty on imported salt. The income fetched from salt is observed by Pliny, who remarks that it furnished more revenue in India than those derived from gold and pearls. Strabo and Clitarchus also refer to the salt-mountains in this country.¹⁵²

The states in ancient India acted as the bankers, and lent money to the subjects with the principal motive to help them, but incidentally for making profit through transactions just like the modern money lenders. Nārada enquires from Yudhishthira whether the money lent to the subjects on nominal rate of interest of 1% or not. It was a concessional rate (Anugrahaṃ).¹⁵³ Inscriptions of the 2nd century A.D. also indicate that the king lent money on the same nominal rate, as is apparent from the Nāsik inscription of Nahapāna.¹⁵⁴ Kauṭilya also refers to the collection of interest on debts and loan of grains.¹⁵⁵

The state claimed ownership on treasure troves because it considered itself as the owner of the land and heir to the heirless property. Furthermore, those were regarded as mineral wealth, so it claimed its ownership on them.

150. SP. 69.28.

151. Gopal, M. H. MPF. p. 96.

152. Ibid. p. 96.

153. Sabha. 5.68.

154. Supra. ch. 5.

155. K.A. 2.15.

The Jātakas, Gautama, Vaśiṣṭha, and Kauṭilya¹⁵⁶ refer to the treasure-trove as the property of the state. The epic does not refer to any such rule regarding treasure trove, but the story of digging out the treasure trove, deposited by Marutta in the Himālayan regions, by the Pāṇḍavas¹⁵⁷ to finance the performance of the Aśvamedha indicates that the treasure-troves were also utilised for filling the treasury and the kings utilised them for carrying out their work.

The Artha-daṇḍa was a type of punishment to be imposed by courts upon the culprits and those were the sources of income to the state.¹⁵⁸ It seems that the fines realised by the local bodies were spent on the works of public utility. The epic refers to the fines imposed by the city-courts to be spent on works related to the protection of the citizens.¹⁵⁹ In villages also, those fines realised by the village-councils from the culprits, were utilised for carrying out the works of public utility.

In the Mahābhārata, there are no references to specific amounts of fines to be imposed upon the culprits. Kauṭilya refers to at least 350 different rates of fines, and Manu also refers to many of them ; perhaps the same¹⁶⁰ amounts were imposed during the compositional period of the epic.

There appear to have been many occasions when the people gave presents to the king, which constituted one of the sources of income to the state. The friends and subordinate kings offered presents on specific occasions. Pāṇḍu is said to have received presents in the form of jewels, cattle, and clothes from many kings.¹⁶¹ The

156. Jataka, Nos. 96, 546, G.D.S. 10.43-44, VDS. 3.13-14 ; K.A. 4.1.

157. Asvamedhika. 3.19-20.

158. SP. 72.10.

159. Ibid. 69.25.

160. Gopal, M. H. op.cit. p. 132, Manu ch. 8.

161. Adi. 105.16-18.

Upāyana Parva in the Sabhā Parva mentions in detail the presents offered to Yudhishtira by many kings. This is actually the allegorical form of actual practice of presents or offerings to the superior kings.

Tributes also formed a source of income to the state, and the kings realised them from the sub-ordinate kings. Pāṇḍu is said to have forced the weak kings to offer Kara to him.¹⁶³ Duryodhana and Yudhishtira also are referred to as realising Bali from the defeated kings.¹⁶³ Bali was realised in the form of ransom, as we see in the case of kings Saṃvaraṇa,¹⁶⁴ who while realising tributes from defeated kings, allowed them to rule over their own territories. Kara¹⁶⁵ and Bali were regular sources of income to the state.

Booty also was a source of income to the state. The Mahābhārata presents illustrations to this effect. Pāṇḍu¹⁶⁶ and Arjuna¹⁶⁷ respectively had brought booty from many defeated countries in order to enrich their treasury. Likewise, Bhīma, Sahadeva and Nakula also have been referred to as having brought booty from many countries which were defeated by them.¹⁶⁸ Suśarmā had instigated Duryodhana to invade the Matsya country with a view to capturing the cattle-wealth of Virāṭa.¹⁶⁹ Arjuna is known as Dhanañjaya¹⁷⁰ as he realised wealth from the kings defeated by him. According to the thinkers of epic, the best way to destroy the foe is to destroy his treasury

162. Adi. 105.21.

163. Aranyaka. 226.3, Virata. 65.15, Sabha. 30.6.

164. Adi. 89.41.

165. Sircar, D.C. op.cit. pp. 255-265.

166. Adi. 105.2-25.

167. Sabha. Chapters. 23-25.

168. Ibid. Chapters 28-29.

169. Virata. Ch. 29.

170. Ibid. 39.11.

(Koshabhāṅga¹⁷¹), so the kings attempted either to capture or destroy the foe's Kosha. The epic suggests that the defeated kings should pacify their victors by offering their Kosha to them.¹⁷²

According to the theorists of the epic, everything on the earth belongs to the Kshatriyas excepting those possessed by the Brāhmaṇas, Tāpasas as well as the temple's property.¹⁷³ Further, they are entitled to capture forcibly the wealth of those persons who do not perform sacrifices or do not spend it on the works of public utility.¹⁷⁴ The property of those persons was confiscated who acted against the state, and that wealth was spent on works of public utility or was offered to the needy Brāhmaṇas for the performances of sacrifices. But, it was a general rule not to capture the wealth of the subjects without valid reasons.

Items of expenditure :

Like the imposition of taxes, public expenditure was also based on certain principles. The state exists for the welfare of the people and the justification of the state expenditure should be sought in the benefit of the community. Nārada questions Yudhishtira, "Is the wealth you are earning being spent on proper objects?"¹⁷⁵ Likewise, king Uśinara says to sage Gālava, "My wealth exists only for my subjects, and not for my own comforts and enjoyments."¹⁷⁶ The epic considers the king as a thief, who utilises the Kosha for his own personal enjoyment only, neglecting the welfare works of the people.

171: Asrama. 11.19.

172. Ibid. 11.18.

173. SP. 134.3.

174. Ibid. 134.4-6, 159.6-7.

175. Sabha. 5.59.

176. Udyoga. 116.13.

Besides this, wealth should not be accumulated in the Kosha, but must be spent for the people's welfare. This point has been well illustrated by presenting the simile that as water from the ocean is spread in all the directions by the clouds, likewise, the wealth from the king's Kosha spreads on the earth in the form of the welfare works done to the people.¹⁷⁷ Wealth should not be accumulated only for accumulation's sake or be concealed neglecting the works of public utility.¹⁷⁸

The doctrine that the utmost economy in expenditure and extravagance be avoided, is borne out by many references. In contrast with the modern ideal of the balanced budget, the epic considers a surplus budget an ideal, and allows 1/4th or 1/2 or the maximum 3/4th as the amount of expenditure out of the total income of the state.¹⁷⁹ So, in order to maintain a surplus budget, the king should be daily informed as to what has been spent, and that, his annual expenses should not, in any case, be more than 1/4th of the total income.¹⁸⁰

In addition, numerous justifications are advanced to keep down the expenses of the state.¹⁸¹ Kauṭilya also advises the king to secure the services of different officials out of 1/4th of the total revenue. He advises the king to augment the receipts with a proportionate diminution of expenditure.¹⁸² Gautama and the Rāmāyaṇa also advance similar views regarding the maintenance of a surplus budget.¹⁸³ Aśoka has also advised the people to follow the principle of minimum and moderate expenditure.¹⁸⁴

177. SP. 2.32.

178. Sabha. 5.101 ; Aranyaka, 243.44.

179. Sabha. 5.60.

180. Ibid. 5.60, 62.

181. Ibid. 5.20, 59.

182. K.A. 2.6, 5.3.

183. GDS. 10.30, VR. Ayodhya, 100.54.

184. R.E. 3.

But, the real control of expenditure does not denote reduction, it means that the public expenditure should be justified in terms of welfare of society, as well as, in terms of financial means at the disposal of the state.¹⁸⁵ The fact is that the state stabilised the treasury by collecting revenue from all possible sources, and consequently spent a considerable amount on the activities connected with the welfare of the people. Elaborate rules also were framed to scrutinize public expenditure in order to avoid extravagance, which, according to the epic, could arise in connection with the king's indulgence in drinking, sports and women.¹⁸⁶

Regarding the general heads of expenditure, the Mahābhārata does not furnish details. It gives only a clue to find out the main heads of expenditure. According to the Mbh. wealth should be spent on four items namely (1) on the works leading to the achievement of what is unobtained to preserve and increase the obtained one's, (2) for the promotion of Dharma, (3) for the realisation of happiness and lastly (4) on the works which help him in obviating dangers.¹⁸⁷ Again it informs us that the king should spend the wealth for the defence of the country, and for the promotion of Dharma, and enjoyment, but the reserve Kosha should not be spent, and must be preserved for critical situation.¹⁸⁸ A perusal of the works to be done by the state, indicates that the main heads of expenditure were the defence, civil-service, judicial administration, economic prosperity, social security, cultural development and religious uplift.

185. Kher, N.N. Public expenditure in ancient India, JIH, Vol. XLII, Part 3, pp. 810-811.

186. Sabha. 5.59.

187. SP. 59.57-58.

188. Ibid. 120.33.

The defence of the state from external aggression is the foremost duty of the king, but it cannot be performed without a standing and well equipped army, always ready to repel the aggressions. But is it possible to maintain such an army without financial resources? Forts were to be built, means of communications were to be developed, and other projects also were to be taken up in hand. Thus it was necessary to spend some amount on the defence of the state, but the percentage of income to be spent on this item, is not referred to in the epic. Sometimes, wars were very expensive, as in the case of king Divodāsa,¹⁸⁹ the epic informs, that his Kosha was exhausted in his war against the Haihayas. Likewise Yudhishthira¹⁹⁰ also had spent such a great deal in financing the Bharata war that there was nothing left with him to offer to the Brāhmaṇas immediately after the termination of the battle. These references show that even during the time of peace, much amount was spent on the defence of the state.

The internal peace and prosperity depend upon the efficiency of the general civil administration. In order to curb the anti-social elements it is essential for the king to maintain a strong police force.¹⁹¹ Besides this, there should be various other administrative departments to look after other branches of administration such as the judiciary, agriculture, irrigation, trade and commerce, revenue administration, espionage and so on. There were paid servants; hence the state had to spend much for the maintenance of general administrative machinery; but the percentage of total income to be spent on civil service is not referred to in the epic.

The palaces and different departments attached to them must have entailed heavy charges on the Kosha. All such

189. Anusasan. 31.19-21.

190. Asvamedhika. 3.12.

191. SP. 76.10.

expenses on the king's establishments were met out of the state's treasury, because there are no evidences to show that the king was to get any separate allowance to meet his requirements. A considerable portion of income was to be spent on the princes, the queens and other members of the royal family and his personal staff and attendants. The epic instructs the king not to misuse the money for his own enjoyment, but it does not mean that he did not spend from the royal treasury, and supported himself on his personal earnings. The taxes have been regarded as the wages of the king, which he could utilise for his personal works, but it was expected that he would not misuse public wealth.

The state was required to extend financial help to the cultivators for the promotion of agriculture. They were to be provided with means of irrigation. The artisans, traders and others were helped by the state. All these things required a huge amount, but the epic does not refer to the specific percentage of the state's income to be spent on these items.

The state's programme of assistance to the destitute, and other activities connected with the welfare of the subjects as a whole, involved huge expenditure. The Mahābhārata instructs the king to support orphans, infants, persons infirmed by old age, helpless widows, blind, dumb, lame, poor and those who have renounced the world.¹⁹² Other contemporary authorities¹⁹³ also furnish the same information. The epic presents illustrations of kings who had promoted works of welfare. Numerous inscriptions inscribed during the compositional period of the epic also prove that the kings actually promoted welfare-works and

192. Vide this work Ch. V.

193. ADS. 2.10.25.8-9, 11, 2.10.26.12, GDS. 10.10, K.A. 2.1, 5.1, VR. Ayodhya, 100.60, Manu 9.201-202.

helped the helpless ones. Aśoka, Huvishka, Gautamīputra Sātakarāṇī and Samudra Gupta are known to have supported the destitutes, and they had helped the helpless ones.¹⁹⁴ The state's establishments, such as the mining, weaving, and workshops appear to have also served the purpose of maintaining the poor and the helpless ones. Thus, it is apparent that the care and responsibility of the needy devolved upon the state, which spent some portion of its income to support them.

The public expenditure was devoted to a wide range of humanitarian activities. Relief measures were to be undertaken during natural calamities like famine, flood, conflagration and epidemics etc. The Mahābhārata considers it as a shameful matter for the king, if his subjects suffer for want of food-grains.¹⁹⁵ It seems that the state established 'Alms' and 'Feeding houses' at important centres throughout the state, where food was distributed to the destitute. Yudhishṭhira had maintained, at government-cost, free kitchens for them.¹⁹⁶ The state had to appoint doctors to look after the health of the subjects. Medical facilities provided to the subjects are also known from the inscriptions as Aśoka informs us that he had established civil and veterinary hospitals in and outside his vast empire.¹⁹⁷ Construction and maintenance of the roads, laying out parks and gardens, digging up wells, construction of rest houses, plantation of trees, opening up of the places for free distribution of water, etc. were some of the humanitarian works undertaken by the state which required a huge sum for proper execution. The epic refers to the Kuru

194. Asoka, R.E. 5, 8, P.E. 7, Huvishka, EI, Vol. 21 p. 60f.
(Mathura inscription). Gautamīputra Satakarni, Ibid.

195. Udyoga. 39.62.

196. Aranyaka. 31.14.

197. RE. 2nd.

kings who had dug out wells and tanks, built houses and places for recreation, and those things multiplied during the regency of Bhīṣma when Dhṛitarāshṭra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura were minors.¹⁹⁸ The epigraphic evidences also prove that benevolent kings like Aśoka gave personal attention to these things.¹⁹⁹

For the spread of education, the state helped the learned ones who had established educational institutions. The Śrotriya-Brāhmaṇas and other persons who were engaged in the pursuits of different branches of learning were helped financially by the state. The artists also got help from the state. All those things required adequate financial resources. Besides this, the epic informs that the learned Brāhmaṇas got tax free land.

The state had to do much for the promotion of Dharma, and for this, it had to support the learned Brāhmaṇas, Tāpasas and others, and had to perform sacrifices. These works also required finance from the Kosha. This has been dealt elsewhere in this work.²⁰⁰

The state festivities, and merry-making were a regular feature, and appear to have involved considerable expenditure. The kings had their own Nāṭya-śālās.²⁰¹ The Samāja was held and the state spent large amounts for its celebrations.²⁰² It supported the acrobats, dancers and others who entertained the people in villages and cities. Some epigraphic evidences also prove that festivities and Samāja were a regular feature during the compositional period of the epic. The Hāthīgumphā inscription of

198. Adi. 102.11.

199. RE. 2nd.

200. Supra, Ch. 5.

201. Virata 23.17-18.

202. Ibid. 12.12-17.

Kharavela refers to the measures adopted by him for the recreation of his people.²⁰³

The maximum benefit is a major consideration of economy in the Mahābhārata. The expenses are for the people's happiness. Only a sound financial system could have enabled the state to afford such vast expences, but the possibility, of deviation from the principle of moderate and reasonable expenditure in some cases cannot be ruled out, as it is apparent in the case of king Suvarchas²⁰⁴ but such cases were rare, and generally, the kings utilised the Kosha properly.

In the scheme of the epic, the king is required to have some portion of his total income as reserve Kosha which is not to be spent even during ordinary critical periods, The purpose of maintaining some of its portion as the reserved Kosha was to preserve some amount for obviating the dangers when there was nothing to maintain the army or finance other measures for the state's protection. Mahāmāya Śambara's view advocating the preservation of the reserved Kosha²⁰⁵ has been quoted by the epic. Sañjaya was rendered helpless in fighting against his foe due to lack of financial resources; but he liberated his state only when he got the reserved Kosha known to his mother Vidulā.²⁰⁶

The Financial administration :

A study of the village-administrative system as referred to in the epic shows that the village-heads were incharge of the realisation of revenue from the villagers, perhaps

203. Sircar, D.C., SI, p. 215.

204. Asvamedhika. 4.9-12:

205. SP. 128.32-33, Supra. Ch. 3.

206. Vdyoga. 134.8.

through the village-councils, and deposited the amounts to their superior counterparts. The amount so collected reached from the village head to the Rāshṭrīya, and ultimately, he deposited it in the central treasury.

The cities were the main places where the commercial and industrial activities were in progress, and the state also got opportunity to realise more taxes from the persons concerned. The epic refers to the Śulkopajivins²⁰⁷ who realised taxes from the artisans and merchants. It was their duty to maintain records of the matters related to revenue and taxes. The epic instructs the king to have control on them, so that the merchants and others are not unnecessarily harassed. The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya discusses the organisation of revenue department and mentions the duties of the Śulkādhayksha²⁰⁸ and the code of conduct to be followed by the Śulkopajivins.

The epic refers to the Lekhakas or the clerks who maintained the records of income and expenditure²⁰⁹. Kauṭilya refers to them who were employed in the office of the Accountant General²¹⁰. The Koshākshapaṭala²¹¹ has been referred to in the epic. There are references to the Gaṇakas²¹², perhaps the statistical clerks, who counted the amount and kept the statistical records. Those were the same Gaṇakas as referred to by Kauṭilya²¹³, who were appointed in the office of the Accountant-General.

The question arises whether the budget was formulated or not? The epic is in favour of maintaining a surplus budget. There are references which clearly show that the kings took

207. Sabha. 5.103.

208. K.A. 2.21.

209. Sabha. 5.62.

210. K.A. 2.7.

211. SP. 116.19.

212. Sabha. 5.62.

213. K A 2.7.

particular care that the budgetary provisions were maintained properly, and always tried to please the people by spending a great deal for their welfare. King Śrutarvā²¹⁴ had placed his budget before sage Agastya in which the income and expenditure were evenly balanced. It was a balanced budget, and there was no possibility of offering wealth to him by making adjustments in it, and the sage also did not insist on demanding wealth from him. Agastya found the same thing in case of the budgets of kings Vadhṛiyāśva and Trasadasyu also²¹⁵. The epic advocates the principle of surplus budget, but actually presents illustrations of a balanced budget. The former type of budget was regarded as an ideal one and it served as model for the kings.

In the Kaurava administration, there were a large number of employees who counted the amounts and kept their records²¹⁶. Dhṛitarāshṭra has advised Yudhishṭhira to look into the income and expenditure of the state daily in the morning²¹⁷. The Lekhakas and the Gaṇakas presented the records of income and expenditure to the king prior to 12 A.M. and Kauṭilya also assigns the same time to the king to look into the accounts of receipts and expenditure²¹⁸. Perhaps the king looked after the general policy, and appointed an officer to manage the affairs on his behalf, as Yudhishṭhira has been referred to as appointing Sañjaya to look after his affairs of income and expenditure²¹⁹.

The state realised taxes and revenue from the subjects, but the question arises as to where the amounts were deposited and the corns stored, as the taxes were realised both in

214. Aranyaka. 96.1-17.

215. Ibid. 96.1-17.

216. Udyoga. 30.26.

217. Asrama. 10.5.

218. Sabha. 5.62.

219. SP. 41.10.

cash and kind. The epic refers to the Koshāgāra²²⁰ or the treasury-building in which the coins could be deposited. There were Koshapālas²²¹ or the treasury-officers to look after the treasury. There were treasury-guards (Rajakosha-Goptāḥ²²²) to protect the treasury buildings from dacoits, and the state's officer also. Like the Koshāgāras, the state had built its own granaries²²³ in which corns were stored which were realised as taxes or were produced on its own fields. The epic instructs the king to appoint honest and trustworthy persons in charge of the granaries²²⁴. The ideal Koshthāgāra is one which is filled with corns and is guarded by honest and competent persons²²⁵. Kauṭilya furnishes more information regarding the Koshāgāra and Koshthāgāra²²⁶.

The officers, sometimes, stole away the wealth from the Kosha, and even the ministers also indulged in such activities. Those corrupt officers and ministers, sometimes, killed the Rājakoshagoptāḥ (treasury guards), when they informed the king, hence it is his primary duty to provide them protection²²⁷. The epic, by way of illustration, tells us the story of king Kshemadarśin of the Kośala country whose ministers and officials stole away wealth from the Kosha²²⁸.

220. Sabha. 6.57.

221. Asrama, 29.21.

222. SP. 83.2-4.

223. Ibid. 116.20, Sabha. 5.57.

224. SP. 116.20.

225. Ibid. 119.17.

226. K.A. 2.6, 2.15.

227. SP. 83.58.

228. Ibid. Ch. 83.

Chapter XI

ARMY

The ancient Indian political thinkers realising the importance of the army, have considered it as one of the seven constituents of the state¹. The political aspirations led to military conflicts, hence the growing armed clashes enabled our celebrated thinkers to assess its importance in the body politic. The most essential duty of the king is to protect the people ; otherwise the state would come to an end². Internal disturbances and external aggressions cause sufferings to them, hence, in order to remove these, he should maintain a strong and efficient army. King Samvaraṇa of Ayodhyā had successfully protected his state from the aggressions by the Pāñchālas³.

The kings tried to extend the territorial limits of their states, but it was impossible to do so without the help of a strong army. Many ancient kings have been referred to as having the titles of Samrāt and Chakravartin after conquering the earth⁴. The epic has placed high political ideas before them.

The army served the purpose of enriching the Kosha. During the course of invasions, the invaders tried to capture the Kosha of the enemy or realised tributes from all those kings who were defeated by them, and in this way enriched their Kosha⁵.

1. SP. 69.62-63, 308.153-155.

2. Vide this work, Chap. 5.

3. Adi. 90.31-42.

4. Supra. Chap. 4.

5. Ibid. Chap. IX.

Dharma and army are co-related. According to the theorists of the epic, the former cannot be protected without the help of the latter⁶. Even a righteous king, if he does not have a standing army and neglects the defence of his country, cannot prosper. The story of king Suvarchas is a shining example of this dictum⁷.

Regarding the comparative importance of the Kosha and Bala, the ancients have advanced different views. Kaunapadanta considers the army as superior to Kosha on the ground that it cannot be protected without the help of the former⁸. The epic also furnishes the same information⁹. It regards the Kosha and Bala as the two roots for the existence of the state, but in contrast to its earlier view, it asserts that the former is the root of the latter, as it cannot be maintained without the former¹⁰. Kauṭilya also advances the same view¹¹. The army is the real strength of the Kshatriyas, as the spiritual knowledge and youth are real wealth of the Brāhmaṇas and the women respectively. So, it is the king's duty to please the army because the main objectives can be achieved through its help¹².

The military system as described in the epic is of a militarily developed society. The question arises as to what were the methods and means for the organisation and administration of the army? Where there treatises to guide the kings and military experts in those matters? The epic refers to treatises on military science which were taught to the princes, and perhaps those were composed in the Sūtra style which consisted of four branches¹³ and

6. Ibid. Chap. 2.

7. Asvamedhika. 4.9.14.

8. K.A. 8.1.

9. SP. 128.35, 131.4-5.

10. Ibid. 128.35.

11. K.A. 8.1.

12. SP. 14.4., Virata. 28.11-12.

13. Sabha. 5.53.

ten divisions. It is reasonable to think that during the compositional period of the epic, a rich literature on Dhanurveda was in existence as it refers to the Dhanurveda and Yamtra-Sāstram along with the treatises on matters relating to the elephants, horses and chariots¹⁴.

At present we have many treatises on the military science ascribed to Uśanas and Vaśiṣṭha but their antiquity does not go beyond the 5th century A.D. These works owe much to the treatise composed by Śiva¹⁵. In the epic there is no reference to their treatises. Uśanas and Bṛihaspati have only been referred to as the writers on military science. The Arthaśāstra¹⁶ also refers to these two writers who had invented some new battle orders. The epic refers to the Vyūhas invented by Uśanas¹⁷. At present, the original work ascribed to Uśanas is not available, and the Auśanas Dhanurveda-Saṁkalanam edited by Pt. Rajarama and extracted from the Vīramitrodaya by Mitra Mishra, a contemporary of Akbar, cannot be regarded as a genuine work representing the original treatise composed by him. The battle-orders invented by Bṛihaspati were arranged on the battlefield of the Kurukshetra¹⁸. The work composed by him is not available, hence, it is very difficult to assume anything regarding its exact nature and form.

Divisions and types of army :

The epic refers to the four-fold army namely the infantry, cavalry, elephantry and chariots¹⁹.

14. Ibid. 5.109-110.
15. Chatravarti, P.C., AWAI, Introduction, Pp. 9-12.
16. K.A. 10.6.
17. Aranyaka. 269.5, Karna. 22.11, Asrama. 12.15.
18. Ibid. 269.5-6, Bhishma. 43.37-54, Karna. 22.11, 31.26.
19. Aranyaka. 17.2, Udyoga. 19.1, Karna. 5.12, 15.11, Virata. 63.12.13, 12.13, Salya. 8.2, 22.84.

The infantry was a very prominent wing of army. It had many sub-branches, such as archers, swords-men and club-holders. Each archer had a bow, quiver full of arrows, armour on the body, boots, and finger protecting devices manufactured out of the skin of crocodile. He also held a sword to fight with, in case the arrows were exhausted or the bow was broken. The sword-holders were equipped with shields and club, and even the Javelin holders also were well equipped.

Cavalry was an important wing of the army. It was superior to the foot-soldiers in respect of fast movement. The epic refers to more than fifty varieties of horses which were deployed on the battle-field of Kurukshetra²⁰. Their classification is based on their colours and other special characteristics. Another type of classification was based on their breed, and in this category the Kāmboja, Nadija, Aratta, Mahija, Sindhuja, Vanāyuja, Pārvata and Tittiraja have been mentioned²¹. Kauṭilya²² considers some of these horses as the very best among different breeds of horses.

More emphasis was given on the training of the army-horses. The Aśvādhyaksha looked after this affair. Vāhuka²³, the Aśvādhyaksha of king Rītuparna of Ayodhayā, Granthika²⁴, and king Virāṭa were well versed in matters relating to the horse-training and medical treatment. The epic refers to the Hayajñāḥ²⁵ who were experts in finding out the nature of horses; all types of training (Vinayaṃ) to be imparted to them, methods of controlling them and medical treatment to be provided to them. Due

20. Drona. Ch. 23.

21. Bhishma. 86.3-5.

22. K.A. 2.30.

23. Aranyaka. 64.2, 6.

24. Virata. 3.2-3.

25. Ibid. 11.6-7.

to efficient training imparted to them, they did not remain fearful and even the wicked ones became disciplined. Achārya Śālihotra²⁶ was a pioneer in the field of the science of horse rearing, and later on, his name itself became the substitute for this science.

Horses were kept in Aśvāgāras²⁷ built inside the walls of the cities or the forts. King Rītuparṇa of Ayodhyā²⁸ is referred to as maintaining an Aśvaśālā.

Regarding the horse-equipments, the epic informs us that they were covered with armours²⁹, and their backs were covered with saddles.³⁰ The sculptural representations belonging to the compositional period of the epic also confirm it as on the Sānchī reliefs saddle is clearly visible on the back of some of the horses.³¹ The riders put on tunics, but sometime they put on breast-plates and strong helmets (Siratrāṇa). They carried long lances and swords. The Parthians had introduced horse-archery in India and there are references to that effect in the epic³²; though, the epic generally refers to the horse-riders fighting with spears and swords.

Generally, two or four wheeled chariots were used on the battle-fields, and the early classical arts belonging to the compositional period of the Mahābhārata also corroborate the same. Chariots were covered with gold or iron plates³³ and some with tiger's skin. The epic refers to the Sāṅgrāmika³⁴-Ratha or the war-chariot, a technical term

26. Aranyaka. 69.25

27. SP. 69.52.

28. Aranyaka. 69.11, 71.6.

29. Bhishma. 86.3-5.

30. Chakravarti, P.C. op.cit. p. 39.

31. Maisey, F.C., op.cit. p. 6.

32. Adi. 12.4, 24.28.

33. Aranyaka. 18.1, Drona. 42.5.

34. Anusasana. 53.30-31.

which is also found in the *Arthasāstra*³⁵ of Kautilya. The chariots were provided with flags and war weapons. These were driven by trained horses, and they were provided with defensive measures such as armours.³⁶ The horses of Sindh and Gandhāra were regarded as the most suitable. They were usually used in chariots.³⁷ Generally, two horses were deployed in a chariot, but sometime their number was four³⁸ and even more.

The chariot-drivers were equally important because the success of chariot-soldiers depended very much on their skill and presence of mind, hence the epic gives emphasis on their training. They had to be experts in comprehending the intentions of soldiers, and the directions given by the chariot-soldiers. They had to be particularly proficient in the use of different types of weapons, loading of arms, medical treatment, different types of omens such as the meanings of the voices of birds and cattle.³⁹ The *Sūtas* were expert chariot-drivers and had a respectable place in society.⁴⁰ The drivers had to drive the chariots to the strategic points, and besides, they had to protect the horses and warriors from being wounded. The chariot-driver was not to runaway from the battlefield, and he had to encourage the soldiers to fight and to act according to exigencies of time and place.⁴¹ The *Mahābhārata* refers to king Nala, Kṛishṇa and Śalya as the most illustrious and efficient charioteers.

The chariot-soldiers put on armours and were equipped with different types of weapons, such as quivers, swords

35. K.A. 2.30.

36. *Aranyaka*. 18.1., 69.11-12., *Virata*. 30.16.

37. *Aranyaka*. 79.11-13.

38. *Udyoga*. 152.10.

39. *Karna*. 28.5-8.

40. *Udyoga*. 152. 8:9., 179.11.

41. *Aranyaka*. 19. 3-10.15., 20.2-6., 22.5-7., 23.18-19.

and so on.⁴² Big and long Śaktis, Clubs, Prāsas, Asanis, stone-pieces and poisonous serpents were kept inside the Chariots for carrying on the fight in different circumstances when bows and arrows did not prove to be effective and useful.⁴³

In the chariots, wheels were more important, so the enemy attempted to cut and break them in order to defeat the chariot-soldiers. Therefore, attention was given to their protection. Each wheel was protected by a special soldier, known as the Chakra-Raksha.⁴⁴ They played an important role in protecting not only the wheels but the horses, the drivers and soldiers. Like Yodhāgāras and Aśvaśālās, there were Rathasālās⁴⁵ inside the city walls in which chariots were kept. King Rītuparna of Ayodhyā had built a Rathasālā⁴⁶ for keeping his chariots.

The epic furnishes numerous details regarding elephants, and instructs the king to appoint a very trustworthy and efficient person as incharge of elephants-affairs.⁴⁷ They were usually captured in territory adjoining the Himālayas and were trained by trainers.⁴⁸ King Virāṭa had employed Hasti-sādins for training them in different movements, and also for performing different types of deeds.⁴⁹ His elephants were tall and heavy-bodied, powerful, had beautiful teeth, and were of sixty years,⁵⁰ but Kauṭilya regards the elephants of 40 years as the very best for military use.⁵¹

The war-elephants were covered with iron armours

42. Ibid. 18.3.

43. Ibid. 43.4-6.

44. Karna. 7.30.

45. SP. 69.52.

46. Aranyaka. 71.28.29.

47. SP. 69.28.

48. Virata. 49.15-16.

49. Ibid. 30.27.

50. Virata. 30.7-10, 26-27.

51. K.A. 2.31.

with nailed protective devices.⁵² The enemy's soldiers attacked their feet in order to disable them from moving ahead and special soldiers were deployed to protect them.⁵³ The elephant-drivers were equipped with Añkuṣa and Tomaras to control and guide them.⁵⁴ Seven soldiers should be mounted on one elephant, two of them should be Añkuṣa-holders (most probably they were drivers), two archers, two swordsmen and the remaining one should hold Śakti and Triśūla.⁵⁵ But it seems to be more a piece of literary description than reality. Megasthenes⁵⁶ refers to four riders on an elephant. In the sculptural representations at Sāñchī, three riders are shown as seated on a war-elephant and this seems to be reasonable.

Elephants were kept in Gajāgāras⁵⁷ which were built inside the ramparts of the city. Kauṭīlya refers to details regarding the size and planning of the Gajāśālas but the epic does not mention it in detail.

Besides referring to the Chaturāṅgiṇī Senā, the epic refers to the Prakāśa and Aprakāśa army.⁵⁸ The former type consists of eight constituents namely the four fold divisions (already mentioned) the Vishti, navy, spies and guides. This Prakāśa army was known as the Ashtāṅga-Bala. The Aprakāśa-Bala is that which is not visible to the enemy such as the poisons and chemicals prepared with herbs and other things.

The four constituents of the Prakāśa Bala have already been mentioned. Vishti, as a wing of army, consisted of those persons who went with the army for erecting tents,

52. Virata, Ch. 30.

53. Drona. 28.8-9, Udyoga. 149.82.

54. Virata. 31.3.

55. Udyoga. 152.13-14.

56. Aelina, History of Animals, quoted by P. C. Chakravarti, op.cit. p. 52.

57. SP. 69.52.

58. Ibid. 59.40-43.

constructing roads and bridges, digging out wells, repairing Ghātas, carrying on weapons, medicines, armours, instruments, provisions, and they removed the wounded ones from the battle field along with their weapons and armours.⁵⁹

The navy was a wing of the army but it did not attain the place occupied by the four fold divisions. Its utility was realised for easy means of transporting war materials and for despatching soldiers to distant places on short notice. The true nature of the Indian navy was of a commercial and transporting fleet rather than a fighting force. The epic has given only a few scanty references.⁶⁰ In the absence of more convincing proofs, it is difficult to believe about the existence of the epic man of war cruising in Indian waters. The epic refers to the Audaka-Durgas or the forts in waters or on Islands.⁶¹ The existence of such forts necessitated the organisation of the naval force, but the epic does not enlighten us on this point.

Chara or military espionage served an important function because he tried to find out the secrets of the foe, and rightly the spies have been regarded as the eyes of the king. So, in order to get the necessary information, the king should employ them in every district, and in every fort. Military espionage has been discussed elsewhere in this work.⁶²

The Desīkas or military guides were acquainted with the roadways and waterways inside and outside the state as they had to lead the army to the places to be invaded. This wing may be compared with the present Signal Corps of the army or the Advance-Guard. They were very useful for the army's safety while on march.

The epic refers to a third type of classification of army,

59. K.A. 10.4.

60. Sabha. 28.44.

61. SP. 87.5.

62. Infra. Ch. 12.

known as the six fold division, which is based on the source of recruitment. Such an army consisted of hereditary troops, mercenaries, fighting guilds, soldiers supplied by the allies, troops captured or won over from the foe and the forest tribes.⁶³ The hereditary soldiers have been considered as most loyal to the king, but the Śreṇībala and mercenary are inferior to them in loyalty.⁶⁴ The forest tribes and Amitrabala are not reliable, so they were not deployed on places of strategic importance.

Organisation and administration :

According to thinkers of the epic, only courageous, brave and skilful persons, expert in handling weapons, may ensure victory. They can bear sufferings and hardship, hence such persons should be recruited to the armed forces who are physically well-built.⁶⁵

The Kshatriyas were the fighting class, but the Mahābhārata does not give special emphasis only on their recruitment. Some of the heroes were Brāhmaṇas such as Kṛipa, Droṇa, Aśvatthāmā and others. The epic instructs the king not to grant taxational concessions to those Brāhmaṇas who adopt military professions.⁶⁶ It shows that they were also recruited to the armed forces. The Vaiśyas and Śūdras were also recruited, and it seems that they formed the rank and file of the army. The scriptural law, however, enjoined that men of high caste might follow the professions of the lower caste during emergency but, they must never follow the profession of a caste which is superior to them. The epic refers to the Vaiśya and Śūdra soldiers fighting on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. Āṭavikas were an uncivilised tribe, and they certainly belonged to the fold of the

63. Asrama. 12.7.

64. Udyoga. 165.18 and Asrama. 12.8 respectively.

65. Asrama. 12.17.

66. SP. 77.5-9.

Śūdras but they formed a wing in the Shadaṅga-Bala: Kauṭilya also approves the employment of the Vaiśyas and Śūdras in the army, though he regards the Kshatriya as the best type of soldiers.⁶⁷

What should be the abilities and characteristics of persons who are to be recruited to the armed forces? On the basis of geographical considerations, the epic⁶⁸ informs us that the soldiers hailing from Gandhāra, Sindh and Sauvira were brave, fearless and fought with Prāsa and Nakhara. The persons of the Uśinara country were experts in handling all types of weapons and the easterners were experts in elephant's war. The Yavana, Kāmboja and Māthura soldiers were experts in boxing, and the southerners in swordsmanship.

Those soldiers have been considered to be very brave and courageous whose voice, eyes and movements resemble with those of the lions and tigers⁶⁹. The soldiers whose voice is like that of a deer, and the eyes like those of a tiger, are fast runners, but are less intelligent, and become the victims of negligence. Those are expert shooters whose voice resembles with the thunder of the clouds, and who are physically well built and tall like the camels⁷⁰. But those persons whose bodies are bent like the bodies of cats, and have thin nerves and a few hair on their bodies, are very active, hasty and invincible⁷¹. Those soldiers attack the enemy's forces promptly whose eyes are half closed and half open like those of alligators⁷². Further, they fight excellently on the battle field, whose eye-balls either are deep into the eye-lids or are outside them⁷³. Those

67. K.A. 9.2.

68. SP. 102.3-5.

69. Ibid. 102.6.

70. Ibid. 102.8.

71. SP. 102.9-10.

72. Ibid. 102.11.

73. Ibid. 102.12-13.

soldiers fight like the intoxicated elephants and are invincible whose eyes are slightly bent, foreheads high, cheek are thin, have little muscles and have signs of the Vajra and wheels on their bodies⁷⁴. The epic regards those soldiers as excellent fighters whose tops of the hair are yellow and scattered, whose bones of ribs, cheek and mouths are long and flat, whose shoulders are high, neck flat, and whose mouths are flat like those of cats and have harshness in voice⁷⁵. It is very difficult to say as to how far these characteristics were sought for in the soldiers. It seems that the recruiting officers kept these points in their minds while recruiting troops to the army. These actually served as guide lines.

After recruitment, units were formed to group them together in different wings of the army. According to Vāsiṣṭha⁷⁶, the smallest unit consists of the soldiers and the next higher division was of 100 soldiers. Kauṭilya⁷⁷ also refers to the divisions of 10, 100, and 1000 soldiers. The epic⁷⁸ also refers to the divisions of army as mentioned by Kauṭilya.

Besides this, the Mahābhārata refers to another method of forming the Units. The smallest unit is a Patti consisting of one chariot, one elephant, three horses and five troopers. The next higher units in ascending order included the Senāmukha, Gulma, Gaṇa, Vāhinī, Pṛitnā, Chamū, Anīkanī and Akshauhiṇī. Each of the above units was three items bigger than the preceding one's but Akshauhiṇī which was considered to represent a complete army was ten times larger than Anīkanī⁷⁹. The following table will clearly explain the nature of these units :

74. Ibid. 102.14-15.

75. Ibid. 102.15-18.

76. BDS. 19.17-18.

77. K.A. 10.6.

78. SP. 101.28.

79. Adi. 2.13-23.

Unit	Chariot	Elephant	Horse	Foot soldiers
Patti	1	1	3	5
Senāmukha	3	3	9	15
Gulma	9	9	27	45
Gaṇa	27	27	81	136
Vāhini	81	81	243	405
Prītnā	243	243	729	1215
Chamū	729	729	2187	3645
Anīkanī	2187	2187	6561	10935
Akshauhiṇī	21870	21870	65610	109350

It is difficult to say as to how far these units were based upon actual military usages. The epic refers to some other units of the army such as the Senā consisting of 500 war-chariots and 500 war elephants. The Prītnā is referred to as consisting of ten such Senās, and ten Prītnās formed a Vāhini⁸⁰. The Patti consisted of 55 troopers, and three such units constituted a Senāmukha or Gulma and the same number of units of a Gulma constituted a Gaṇa⁸¹. but the aforesaid Ādi-Parva scheme of the military units was probably not fully understood and practised during the compositional period of the epic. Generally, the terms Senā, Vāhini, Prītnā, Dhvajinī, Chamū, Akshauhiṇī and Varūthinī have been used in the sense of army⁸².

Different units of army were placed under different categories of military officers such as the Daśādhipati, Śatādhipati and the Sahasrādhipati who were commanding officers of 10,100 and 1000 troopers respectively⁸³. Kauṭilya also refers to such officers but the term used by him are Padika, Senāpati and Nāyaka⁸⁴. The epic also contains

80. Udyoga. 152.21.

81. Ibid. 152.24-25.

82. Ibid. 152.22.

83. SP. 101.28.

84. K.A. 10.6.

terms like Nāyaka and Senāpati in the sense of military commanders in general. The general term for the army officers Balamukhyāḥ⁸⁵ and they were experts in handling all types of weapons and were courageous and aggressive.

The Senāpati was the C-in-C of the armed forces⁸⁶. The necessity of having a Senāpati for the army has been discussed in connection with the story of the appointment of Skanda as the Senāpati of army of gods⁸⁷. The importance of Senāpati has been expressed in these words that even a big army is dispersed like the row of ants without a commander, so in order to guide and encourage the army units, it is essential to appoint⁸⁸ a Senāpati. The army without him is lifeless and blind, and cannot stay at the battle field even for a moment. An army without Senāpati is like a boat without the boatsman, and a Chariot without a driver, or like a Sārtha without a Sārthavāha⁸⁹.

Regarding the abilities and qualifications of the person to be appointed as the Senāpati, the epic asserts that he should be a man of wide learning and experience, and must be of high birth, be brave, courageous, wise and grateful to the king⁹⁰. All these requisites were found in Droṇa the Senāpati of Duryodhana. He should be expert in forming the battle orders, handling weapons, able to acclimatise himself with climatic conditions and should be competent enough to know the designs of the foes⁹¹.

The duty of Senāpati was to organise and train the soldiers in different methods and styles of warfare. During war periods, it was his duty to lead the soldiers to the battlefield, arrange the battle-orders, guide them to fight

85. Sabha. 5.37.

86. Udyoga. 149.3-5, 153-2 ; Asram. 10.12-13 ; Udyoga, 146.6-8.

87. Aranyaka. Ch. 213.

88. Udyoga. 153.2.

89. Sabha. 18.16 and Droṇa. 5.5-11.

90. Droṇa. 5.2-7.

91. SP 86.31.

and encourage them not to leave the battlefield. The epic refers to Sarvasenāpati or the Supreme-Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Bhishma was the Sarvasenāpati⁹² in the Kaurava army. Many kings had brought their army to the battlefield under the charge of different commanders, hence for co-ordinating them all, the Sarvasenāpati was essential.

The maintenance of discipline is of vital importance because this alone can ensure the training and efficiency of the army. It may be assumed that the Unit-Commanders imposed the rules of discipline on soldiers under their charge. The epic prescribes very heavy punishment for those soldiers, who do not observe the rules of discipline. It even recommends that a deserter from the ranks might be killed mercilessly and might even be burnt to death⁹³.

The effectiveness of attack depends upon the proper training imparted to the soldiers. Even a smaller army which is well trained, is better than a large army consisting of incompetent and untrained soldiers⁹⁴. The soldiers received their training in the methods of warfare as described in the Dhanurveda and the Yamtrasūtram which mostly dealt with the handling of weapons. The general term for drill or exercise was Vyāyāma⁹⁵. The soldiers were so trained that they could be experts in riding (Ārohe), descending (Paryavaskande), advancing (Saraṇe), jumping (Plute), striking well (Samyagpraharaṇe), marching (Yāne), and retreating (Vyapayane)⁹⁶. A perusal of these terms indicates that the scope of training was very wide, and soldiers were trained in different styles of fighting. Besides this, they were trained to acclimatise themselves with different climatic conditions and to fight on different types

92. Udyoga. 162.23.

93. SP. 99.21-22.

94. Bhishma. 4.26. cf. SP. 103.20-21.

95. Bhishma. 72.9.

96. Ibid. 72.8.

of battle-grounds, in different seasons, with different weapons.

The epic furnishes numerous informations regarding an ideal army in connection with the army of the Kauravas⁹⁷. That was equipped with all types of weapons and the soldiers were expert in handling all kinds of weapons. The army consisted of four fold divisions, and they were provided with flags. The soldiers and officers were loyal and noble, and exhibited their gallantry on the battle field. The army was free from evils and all the soldiers were young. They were physically well-built, but they were not thin nor fat, and neither tall nor small. The army was trained and well paid⁹⁸.

What are the characteristics of a victorious army? An army can achieve victory which is well organised and equipped with weapons, flags, musical instruments and other decorations⁹⁹. But that army is considered to be victorious where the soldiers are spirited and enthusiastic. It is not the numerical superiority of the army which counts, but it is only the enthusiasm and high spirits of the soldiers which finally help in achieving victory. Even the great heroes are forced to leave the battled-field, and the whole army is broken, if a single soldier, after being disappointed, leaves the battle-field¹⁰⁰. The Vyasanams among soldiers lead to many evils; and even impair the strength and quality of the fighting force. So, a wise king should try to remove the evil influences in order to make the army loyal and efficient. One may refer to many evils, but the most serious is the element of dissension in the army. This may be caused either by internal or external agencies. It is usually done by offering bribes to the army-chiefs¹⁰¹. It is

97. Aranyaka. 17.5-6.

98. Bhishma. 72.1-9.

99. Ibid. 4.15-20.

100. Ibid. 4.21-31.

101. Virata. 46.11; Sabha. 5.49.

very difficult to unify even the Maula army ; when it is broken and disunited by the creation of dissension. It has been mentioned that the army of the Kauravas was free from Vyasan¹⁰². Kauṭilya refers to these in detail¹⁰³. The evil influences can be removed if an attempt is made to please the soldiers. But, how one can please the army ? The epic discusses this point and suggests various remedial measures including the payment of suitable salary in time¹⁰⁴.

The Mahābhārata emphasises the supreme importance of keeping the army contented and gratified, because discontent among troops is a source of grave danger to the state. The question of Nārada to Yudhisṭhira throws considerable light on the matters of offering salary to the soldiers at proper time. Nārada asks—"Do you give to your troops the sanctioned rations and wages at the appointed time or do you cause resentment by withholding them ? Do you know that irritation caused by the arrears of pay and irregularity in the distribution of rations lead to rebellion¹⁰⁵?" The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya and the Rāmāyaṇa also furnish similar information¹⁰⁶. There are references in the epic which clearly show that the army received salary at proper time. The Andhaka-Vṛishṇi soldiers, for instance, received suitable salary in time along with uniforms and weapons¹⁰⁷. In that army, there was none who received very small amount and besides there was none who received his salary after the due date. There was none who served the armed¹⁰⁸ forces voluntarily. The soldiers in the Kaurava army got their salary according to their merits and

102. Bhishma. 72.2.

103. K.A. 8.5.

104. SP. 53.4-12 ; 59.47.

105. Sabha. 5.38-39.

106. K.A. 8.5, VR, Ayodhya. 100.32-33.

107. Aranyaka. 16.21.

108. Ibid. 16.22.

works¹⁰⁹. King Rītuparṇa had appointed Vāhuka (Nala) as his Aśvādhyaksha on a salary of Statam¹¹⁰ Śatāḥ which is equal to 3750 (Kārshāpaṇa) coins; and this tallies with Kauṭilya who refers to 4000 as the salary of the Aśvādhyaksha¹¹¹. In the army of Yudhishtīra, every¹¹² Rathin got 1000 coins as his salary; but the type of coin is not mentioned. There are ample evidences to prove that during the compositional period of the epic, the soldiers received adequate salary. Arrian informs that the pay which they received from the state being so liberal that they could with ease maintain themselves¹¹³ and others.

Besides receiving their salary, sometimes, the soldiers got exemptions from land-taxes, and were given pieces of lands. These perhaps were in addition to their salaries. The Parihāra¹¹⁴ was the village from where the soldiers were recruited to the armed forces, and the state did not realise usual taxes from such villages. It seems that the land grants were offered only to those officers who had distinguished records of service to their credit, and in general, land-grants in lieu of cash wages, were not in vogue. When the soldiers, however, went out on an expedition, they were offered salary in advance in order to support their dependents, because it was uncertain as to when they would return from the battle field. The military officers decided the period for which the salary was to be given to them in advance. The epic instructs the king to honour and decorate those¹¹⁵ soldiers with Chandana (Paste) and Maṇḍana (Decoration) who exhibit their skill, and thereby, help in achieving victory: The salary of such

109. Bishma. 72.9.

110. Aranyaka. 64.6.

111. Supra, Ch. I.

112. Sabha. 54.20.

113. Indika. XI.

114. Asrama. 16.15.

115. SP. 101.35.

a soldier was doubled¹¹⁶. Kauṭilya gives a graded list of monetary rewards to be offered to soldiers¹¹⁷ for gallantry, but the epic does not furnish such information. It was the duty of the king to support the dependent of those soldiers, who scarified their lives while fighting or were disabled on the battle-field¹¹⁸. King Pāṇḍu is referred to as having supported the sons and grandsons of such soldiers¹¹⁹.

For the Management of military affairs, an efficient administrative machinery was essential; hence the epic instructs the king to build Balādhikaraṇa¹²⁰ or the war-office inside the ramparts of the city. The Mbh. regards the Rakshādhikaraṇa as one of the 5 means which cause prosperity to the state¹²¹. The existence of the Balādhikaraṇa is proved by seals bearing the legend Balādhikaraṇa found at Vaiśālī. The seals belong to the Gupta period.

The epic instructs the king to build Bhāṇḍāgāra¹²² or store house for storing weapons, equipments, foodgrains and other materials. This department, perhaps, was under the charge of a special officer. It seems that the defence department had many subsections, and the accounts, and striking commands were under the charge of two separate officers, as we see Yudhisṭhira appointing Nakula to keep records of the numerical strength of his soldiers, the essential supplies required for the army, and salary to be paid to them. Arjuna was appointed by him as the Commander-in-charge of the striking¹²³ command.

116. Ibid. 101.27.

117. K.A. 10.3.

118. Sabha. 5.44.

119. Adi. 130.6.

120. SP. 69.52.

121. Ibid. 94.24-25.

122. Ibid. 69.62.

123. SP. 41.11-12

Army on the march :

A king should invade his enemy after acquainting himself with the real strength of his foe. Necessary measures must be taken before hand for protecting the capital and for keeping the rear safe. Besides these, climatic conditions are also to be kept in view. The autumn and the spring are the most suitable seasons for taking military expeditions, as it is the time of harvest and plentiful water supply, and the season is neither cold nor dry but moderate¹²⁴. Kauṭilya and Manu also advance the same¹²⁵ view. These were only general guidelines, and it was not necessary to follow them in all conditions. These were to be decided, if the foe was in danger, neglected the state's affairs, indulged in Vyasanās¹²⁶, was at war with other kings, was unalert and weak¹²⁷ or if his country was under the grip of famine¹²⁸. The main purpose included destruction of the foe; and this could be done at any time when a suitable opportunity was available.

When the expedition was decided upon, the king consulted his astrologers to find out an auspicious and lucky moment for the army's march from the capital. According to the epic, the king who starts under a proper constellation, always gets victory on the battle-field¹²⁹. On the eve of the army's departure from the capital town, some religious rites were performed to please the gods for the removal of hindrances and for achieving victory on the battle-field. Āśvalāyana and Kauṭilya have also prescribed such religious rites which are to be performed for achieving victory¹³⁰.

124. Ibid. 101.8-10.

125. K.A. 9.1; Manu. 7.182-3.

126. Sabha. 5.47.

127. SP. 69.19-20.

128. Sabha. 5.54.

129. SP. 101.16-17.

130. AGS. 3.12.166; K.A. 10.3.

The Mahābhārata furnishes details regarding the order of march of the army. In the first line, the infantry was required to be in front, the war chariots in the rear, and in the centre, there were women accompanying the army, who were wives of the prominent soldiers or belonged to the harem¹³¹. The old persons who were unable to fight, encouraged the soldiers to fight, and fearful persons were advised to march with the army in order to exhibit the army's numerical strength¹³².

The army on the march was accompanied with bullockcarts, camels, oxen and elephants for transporting the provisions, weapons, tents, grass, fuels and other commodities. It was also ascertained beforehand whether the roads run through the areas where water and grass were easily available. It seems that Deśikāḥ or the guides were well acquainted with the roads, who led the army to the desired place either through plains or through the forests¹³³.

The army encamped at suitable places in order to attack the enemy's forts or territory. The camp should be established near a forest because such a site is useful from many points of view, as the foe cannot see the soliders, and besides, they may get down from the Vāhanas easily under the cover of forests. The enemy may be attacked surprisingly, and in critical situation, the army may take shelter in the forest, so it is better to encamp near a forest under its cover rather than at an open place¹³⁴. The supply of water was easily possible and the moat around the camp could be easily filled with water from the stream. The epic refers to the encampment of Śālva near Dvārakā. He stationed his army on a suitable and plain ground where

131. SP. 101.40-42.

132. Ibid. 101.41 & 43.

133. Ibid. 101.11-12.

134. Ibid. 101.13-15.

there was provision for water supply. He did not encamp on the place which lay in the vicinity of cremation-ground or temple or the Chaityavrikshas¹³⁵. Rāma also is referred to as encamping in Laṅkā where provisions for food and water supply were easily available¹³⁶. The Pāṇḍavas encamped on such a place that was plain, cool, and abounding with fuel and grass. The General, with his assistants, marked out the camp limits, but they avoided cemeteries, temples and compounds dedicated to gods, Āśramas of sages, shrines and other sacred spots. Many tents were erected with the help of labourers for the troops, commanders and allied kings. Those tents were stocked with food, fuel, drink and weapons. The camp area was surrounded with a moat, and guards with proper instructions were posted to guard against surprise attack by the enemies¹³⁷. Duryodhana also had encamped on a place which was level, unfertile, but was suitable for getting grass and fuel¹³⁸. These references throw light on the process, method and plan of encampment. Kauṭilya¹³⁹ also discusses these points.

In ancient Indian statecraft, forts occupied a prominent place, hence those were considered to be as constituents of the state. These matters have been discussed elsewhere¹⁴⁰. So, here only the siegecraft is to be discussed. The invader reached the ramparts after crossing the moat with the help of bridges or boats. The epic does not refer to the tools used in siegecraft, but it may be assumed that ladders were also used to climb the city-walls. The elephants played a prominent role in breaking the city-walls and gates, and rightly they have been regarded as the Pura-

135. Aranyaka. 17.2-3.

136. Ibid. 268.1.

137. Udyoga. 150.68-80.

138. Ibid. 153.33.35.

139. K.A. 10.1.

140. Supra, Ch. 4.

bhettārah¹⁴¹ or the town-breakers. Mining also was a method which enabled the invader to get into the fort. Holes were made beneath the city walls, which opened inside the walls. The use of fire was also adopted for destroying or capturing the forts. The code of Brahmā contained matters regarding the Agnida (fire-setters) in connection with the destructive wings of the army¹⁴². But, the most usual method of siegecraft was to cut the communication lines so that the besieged may lose touch with the outside world. This was necessary for stopping the supply of essential commodities or reinforcement. In such a situation the besieged had to depend on the stored commodities, and ultimately they were forced to surrender before the besieger, because the stored things could not last for long.

The epic suggests various measures for counteracting the siezing of forts. The first one was to present obstruction to the enemy by disconnecting and destroying the means of communications leading to the fort. For this, bridges were broken, bunds were cut open, and water was allowed to flood the area. This method was adopted by the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis to counteract the attack of Śālva over Dvārakā¹⁴³. They placed a large number of obstacles by making two miles area around the city uneven either by digging ditches or by cutting down the trees on the roads. All the wells were made waterless. The bridges were broken, the boats were withdrawn from the rivers, and the moats were filled with dangerous devices.

In spite of all the measures adopted to counteract the invasions, the powerful enemy reached the fort as we see in case of Śālva who had besieged Dvārakā in spite of all the obstacles put in his way by the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis¹⁴⁴.

141. Sabha. 61.17.

142. SP. 59.48-49.

143. Aranyaka, Chapters 15-17.

144. Ibid. 16.3, 21.5.

When the forts were besieged, precautions were taken to prevent the entry of enemy in the fort, and soldiers equipped with weapons were stationed on towers and walls of the fort to repel the invasion. The epic instructs the king to take all possible precautions and suggests that the walls and their towers should be well protected, moats should be filled with water, dangerous fishes and other devices. Huge mechanic war machines should be placed over the Toranas of the city-wall under the direct control of the king¹⁴⁵. Those measures were adopted by the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis for repelling the invasions of Śālva over the fort of Dvārakā. They fortified the city walls on all sides with weapons and arches, combatants, walls and turrets, and miners. The streets were barricaded with spiked wood-works and so on¹⁴⁶.

To guard against the capture of the fort by mining, countermining was resorted to by the defending enemy. The diggers engaged in mining operation were attacked and driven out. The epic refers to the Khanakāḥ who were deployed in the fort of Dvārakā when Śālva had invaded it.¹⁴⁷ They were counterminers who detected the mining operation of enemy's mine-diggers. Kauṭilya¹⁴⁸ has dwelt at length on the methods of countermining.

In order to prevent conflagration caused by the foe, the epic enjoins that on the occasion of seige all thatched houses should be plastered with mud as a protection against fire¹⁴⁹.

The enemy tried to find out the secrets of the besieged king through his own spies. The fifth columnists, dancers, acrobats, musicians and others were very helpful to the enemy, hence the epic instructs the king to expel all such

145. SP. 69.41-43.

146. Aranyaka. 16.5-11.

147. Ibid. 16.5.

148. K.A. 12.5.

149. SP. 69.45.

persons from the fort. Beggars, cartsmen, impotents, and mad persons were also expelled from the fort¹⁵⁰. He should set out his own spies to find out the secret agents of the enemy. All these measures are said to have been adopted by the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis when the fort of Dvārakā was invaded by Śālva¹⁵¹.

The duration of siege was uncertain, hence kings were advised to store food grains, fuels, oil, weapons, medicines and other things. Adequate measures were adopted to augment the supply of water. Doctors were also employed. But, at the same time, attempts were made to force the enemy to leave the fort area¹⁵². Some of these measures were adopted by the Andhaka-Vṛishṇis, and Śālva ultimately was forced to lift the siege of the fort of Dvārakā¹⁵³.

The Mahābhārata informs that different types of soldiers require different types of battle fields, hence strategist selected different kinds of suitable grounds. According to the theorists of the epic, the ground which is grassy, is the best suited for the infantry. The ground covered with bamboo and cane, and the hilly region are also suitable for them¹⁵⁴. The ground especially convenient for the cavalry is one which is dry and plain, and is not strewn with stone pieces. For elephants, the most suitable ground is one which is covered with small plants, grass and water. As for the chariots, the ground must be waterless and plain¹⁵⁵. Kautilya also advances more or less the same views¹⁵⁶.

Besides this, the epic asserts that the army having a greater number of chariots and horses is very effective in

150. Ibid. 69.49-50.

151. Aranyaka. 16.12-14, 19.

152. SP. 69.35-36, 44, 51, 54-57.

153. Aranyaka. 16.21-22, 20.27, 21.5.

154. SP. 101.20.

155. Ibid. 101.18-19.

156. K.A. 10.4.

all seasons excepting rainy seasons. But, elephants and troopers are particularly effective during rainy season. So, the battle-field and types of army should be selected according to the demand of time and place factors¹⁵⁷. The Kurava-Pāṇḍava army fought on the battle-field of the Kurukshetra which was free from all defects¹⁵⁸.

The soldiers on battle field were arranged in such a way that they could give a crushing defeat to the enemy. The epic informs that the Code of Brahmā¹⁵⁹ contained matters on battle-orders, and it refers to Śukra and Brihaspati, the most prominent strategists who had invented some new battle-orders. Kauṭilya¹⁶⁰ also refers to them, and informs that according to the formers, a battle-order should consist of three divisions viz. wings, vanguard and rear guard. Brihaspati added flanks to Śukra's divisions of a battle order. Some of the new developments are preserved in the epic such as the rear-centre, rear-guard, koti and so on.

Kauṭilya refers to four types of battle-orders namely Daṇḍa, Bhoga, Maṇḍala and Asaṁhata¹⁶¹, but the epic does not discuss this topic in a systematic manner. The Sūchīmukha (needle-faced) is one of the varieties of Daṇḍavyūha. Here the soldiers were arranged in a straight line, one behind the another. This was very effective, when the enemy's soldiers were in overwhelming majority¹⁶². Śyena or the Hawk battle-order is also a variety of Daṇḍa-Vyūha, where after the formation of the wings, the front is made to bulge out. This battle order was arranged by Bhishma¹⁶³ on the battle-field of the Kurukshetra.

157. SP. 101.21-22.

158. Abi. 2.10.

159. SP. 59.45.

160. K.A. 10.6.

161. Ibid. 10.6.

162. Bhishma. 19.5.

163. Ibid. 65.7-12.

The Śakaṭavyūha is another variety of Bhogavyūha, where troops in different divisions were arrayed in one continuous chain. It is a variety of Bhoga-vyūha, in which the front is divided into two parts, and the wings are arranged in the form of a staff¹⁶⁴. The Jātakas inform that this battle order was arranged by Prasenajita in order to capture Ajātaśatru¹⁶⁵. It was also arranged by Drona¹⁶⁶. Dhṛitarāshṭra, while delivering his discourse on the science of Govt. to Yudhisṭhira advises him to arrange it as described in the work of Uśanas¹⁶⁷.

The Makaravyūha is a variety of the Bhogavyūha and is referred to as the opposite form of the Śakaṭavyūha¹⁶⁸. The Pāṇḍavas are referred to as having arranged this battle-order. Karṇa and Bhīshma also had arranged it on the battle-field of the Kurukshetra¹⁶⁹.

The Maṇḍalavyūha is another form of battle order in which the wings, flanks and front stood in close proximity to one another without having any intermediate space between them, and it had its two varieties namely the Sarvatobhadra or Durjaya. In the former, the Generals were stationed at strategic positions such as on the right and left wings, the centre and the backside. Kauṭilya has defined Sarvatobhadra as a battle order facing in all directions with flanks as usual, and its front was split up into two halves and the wings into four. The above battle-order was termed as Durjaya¹⁷⁰. Bhīshma had arranged this battle-order on the battle-field of the Kurukshetra¹⁷¹.

The Vajra and Ardhaachandra are two varieties of the

164. K.A. 106.

165. Jataka, No. 283.

166. Drona. 6.15.

167. Asrama. 12.15.

168. K.A. 10.6.

169. Bhishma. 71.4-21; Karṇa. 7.14-21; Bhishma. 65.4 respectively.

170. K.A. 10.6.

171. Bhishma. 77.11-15, 20.

Asamhata-Vyūha in which flanks and front were stationed apart from each other¹⁷². Originally the Vajravūha was originated by Indra. It was very difficult to break it. Arjuna is said to have arranged this battle order, and the treatise by Uśanas contained matters relating to this Vyūha¹⁷³. It was an anti-Manḍalavyūha battle order arranged by Yudhisṭhira¹⁷⁴. The Crescent-battle order was arranged to make the Garuḍa-Vyūha ineffective and Arjuna is referred to as having arranged his soldiers in the former battle-order against the latter type arranged by Bhishma. It was also an anti-crocodile battle-order¹⁷⁵.

The Śṛiṅgātakavyūha was arranged to make the Mahāvyūha ineffective and competent Generals were stationed on its two flanks, namely the centre, and its front portion¹⁷⁶. The Krauñchavyūha or the Heron battle-order was arranged on the battle-field or Kurukshetra and Generals along with soldiers were stationed on the places of its head, eyes, neck, backside, wings and the tail¹⁷⁷. The Garuḍavyūha was similar to the Krauñchāruṇa¹⁷⁸ battle order. The famous Chakravūha battle order was arranged on the pattern of a wheel and the Generals along with the soldiers were stationed on the positions of its spokes and in the centre¹⁷⁹. The Jātakas also refer to this battle order¹⁸⁰. The Padmagarvavyūha was also a very ancient battle order, and the Jātakas mention it. It was a very difficult battle order, and could not be broken easily. This battle order has been discussed in the treatise com-

172. K.A. 10.6.

173. Bhishma. 19.7 & Asrama. 12.15.

174. Ibid. 71.21.

175. Ibid. 52.10-18 & Karna 2.27-31.

176. Bhishma 83.15-19.

177. Ibid. 71.14-21 ; Drona. 6.15.

178. Bhishma. 52.2-9, Drona. 19.4-15.

179. Drona. 32.13-14, 18.

180. Jataka. 283.

posed by Uśanas¹⁸¹. Sometimes, two or more battle orders were combined together, such as the Sakaṭa-Padma-vyūha, Chakraśakaṭavyūha and Padmagarvasūchivyūha¹⁸².

After arranging the soldiers in battle orders, the king, C-in-C and others addressed the soldiers to fight vigorously in order to achieve victory, and never to run away from the battle field. The epic contains a fine piece of speech delivered to the soldiers ready for battle "Let those who are over-come with fear stay behind. Let those also stay behind, who would cause their chiefs to be slain by neglecting to act heroically in battle. Let only such men come who would never turn back from battle or cause their comrades to be slain. The consequences of fleeing away from battle are loss of wealth, infamy and reproach. Those that flee from battle are wretched among men. They simply swell the number of human beings but lack true manhood. When the enemies joining battle tranish the fame of a person, the misery, which he feels is more poignant than the pangs of death. Know, that victory is the root of religious merit, and every kind of happiness..... Resolved upon acquiring the heaven, we should fight regardless of life or death, and with this determination to conquer or die, attain a blessed end, the heaven¹⁸³." A speech of this type was meant to enthuse the soldiers for fighting with courage and fortitude. Kauṭilya¹⁸⁴ also advised the king, the priest and the C-in-C to exhort the soldiers to fight with courage and determination for achieving victory.

Music and musical notes were also used for maintaining the high spirit of the soldiers. To the sound of the musical note, the soldiers got ready to leave the camp for going to

181. Jataka. 283, Drona. 73.23, Asrama. 12.15.

182. Drona. 53.27, 63.21-23.

183. SP. 101.28-39.

184. K.A. 10.3.

the battle field¹⁸⁵. Battle began with the sounds of conches, and other musical instruments. A perusal of war scenes in the epic shows tumultuous uproar caused by the blare of trumpets, thundering of drums and blowing of conch-shells etc. besides shouts and war cries. The musical notes announced the fall of a General and the same were used to inform the soldiers to stop fighting. The epic refers to many musical instruments such as drums, Bheri, Paṇava, Ānaka, Saṁkha, Krakach, Paṭaha, Gośṛiṅga, Mṛidaṅga, Pushkara, Tūrya, Dundubhī, Mahānaka, Dindīva, Govisāṇaka and so on, which were played on the battle field of Kurukshetra¹⁸⁶.

The epic mentions many types of banners which were hoisted on chariots of the heroes or were fixed on the back of the elephants. The banners served as signals and indicated particular party or persons. Information was transmitted with their help. The Mahābhārata refers to the army having flags in a large number¹⁸⁷, which were of different sizes, forms, colours and bore different names¹⁸⁸.

The Indra's flag was known as *Vaijayanta* which was of blue colour, and was unfurled on a staff¹⁸⁹. The flag of Kārtikeya was red in colour with a figure of peacock over its surface¹⁹⁰. Bhīshma had two flags, one had the figure of a palm tree in gold colour and the other was blue in colour with figures of 5 stars, and the sun and the moon¹⁹¹. The flag of Kṛipā was blue, and had the figure of a bull over it, but Droṇa's flag had the figures of a Kamandalu and Vedī depicted in gold colour¹⁹². The flag of Asvat-

185. Karna. 7.13.

186. Aranyaka. 15.7, Virata. 49.15, 57.3, Bhishma. 77.19, 7.35, 13.9, 14.6, Salya. 60.65, Saupatika. 1.59-60, Asrama. 30.13, SP. 101.47.

187. Aranyaka. 17.5-6.

188. Drona. 80.1-3.

189. Aranyaka. 43.8.

190. Ibid. 218.32.

191. Udyoga. 148.5, Bhishma. 17.41, Virata. 50.17-18.

192. Virata. 50.4, Drona. 80.14, Virata. 56.6.

thāmā was red in colour and was depicted either with the figure of a bow or a lion's tail¹⁹³. Balarāma had two flags, namely the Lāṅgaladhvaja and the Tāladhvaja¹⁹⁴. The flags of Karṇa and Ārjuna had the figures of Nāgakashyā and Hanumān respectively¹⁹⁵. Śalya's flag was depicted with Sītā in gold colour, and the flag of Jayadratha had the figure of a white boar decorated with gold wires¹⁹⁶. The flag of king Bhūriśravā was decorated with sacrificial pillar in gold colour and had also the figure of the moon¹⁹⁷. The flags of Duryodhana, Vṛishaseṇa, Bhīma, Pradyumna and Abhimanyu had the figures of elephant peacock, lion, crocodile and Karṇikāra respectively¹⁹⁸. Bhūmiñjaya, the Matsya prince, had the figure of a lion on his flag¹⁹⁹, and the flag of Ghaṭotkacha was decorated either with the figure of a wheel or with the figure of vulture with widened wings, legs and eyes²⁰⁰. All these clearly show that different types of flags were used in ancient India, and the epic contains a description of the same. All these flags, however, are mentioned in connection with war scenes on the battle-field of the Kurukshetra.

Though the epic instructs the king not to fight at night, yet there are many references to show that the rule was violated at times. It was difficult to recognise the soldiers of the opposite parties at night, hence the kings made arrangement for light on the battle field. A large number of Pradīpāḥ were lighted on the battle field in which oil was continuously poured down²⁰¹. They were placed on

193. Drona. 80.9-11, Virata. 50.9.

194. Udyoga. 8.4, Salya. 33.2.

195. Virata. 50.15, Drona. 18.12, 80.7-8.

196. Drona. 80.17-20.

197. Ibid. 80.21-22.

198. Ibid. 80.15, 25-26, Bhishma 45.8, 33, Aranyaka. 18.27.

199. Virata. 33.17.

200. Drona. 22.60, 131.27.

201. Ibid. 139.3.

the backs of elephants, horses, and even chariots also were provided with light²⁰³. The torch-bearers carried the lighted lamps on the battle field, and other persons supplied oil and other provisions like fire to the torch-bearers²⁰³. The epic informs us that in the Pāṇḍava army Pradipās were seen every where²⁰⁴.

The soldiers wounded on the battle field were not left uncared. The epic instructs the kings to recruit four types of physicians for curing the people²⁰⁵. On the battle field, medical aid was essential, hence the kings had to organise medical corps to look after the wounded and the ailing soldiers. The Pāṇḍava had employed physicians and doctors²⁰⁶ in their army, and in camps, there were hundreds of expert paid physicians equipped with all types of provisions²⁰⁷. Many expert surgeons, provided with all provisions, were called to extract the arrows from the body of Bhīṣma²⁰⁸. The doctors and surgeons used medicines for removing pain, and curing the wounds²⁰⁹. Besides these doctors, the Chariot-drivers also were trained in giving first aid to the wounded chariot-soldiers²¹⁰. Kauṭilya also advises the king to appoint doctors and nurses, who, with surgical instruments, appliances, healing ointments, bandages, food and drink should stand behind and encourage those fighting on the battle field²¹¹.

On the battle field, life was very dull and hard, and in order to remove sorrows and tiredness, some kind of recreation was necessary. The epic informs us that after the

202. Ibid. 144.36.

203. Ibid. 138.11-15.

204. Ibid. 138.24-26.

205. SP. 69.57.

206. Udyoga. 142.53.

207. Ibid. 150.78.

208. Bhishma. 115.51-52.

209. Ibid. 77.9-11.

210. Karna. 28.8.

211. K.A. 10.3.

days battle, soldiers returning to their camps, bandaged their wounds and recreated themselves with music and musical notes²¹². In the Kaurava camp, there were hundreds of singers and dancers to recreate the soldiers²¹³. In the Pāṇḍava camp, the musicians were present to recreate the army, and all the programmes of recreation were suspended on the day of Abhimanyu's murder²¹⁴. All these references show that adequate arrangements were made for the recreation of the army.

The battle was fought with the help of weapons, and its ultimate fate was determined by the use of superior arms. The epic classifies weapons into two categories namely the Divyāni or divine and Mānushāni or weapons used by the human beings²¹⁵. The former type of arms were held by gods, and are referred to as being held by the mortals also which were received from them by pleasing them. These weapons are said to be very destructive and were not to be used on ordinary occasions. These were Āgnyeya, Vāruṇa, Vāyavya, Vaishṇava, Aindra, Pāśupata, Brāhma, Pārameshṭhaya, Prajāpatya, Dhātra, Tvāshṭra, Sāvitra, and Vaivasvata, and all of these were known to Arjuna²¹⁶. It appears that these weapons attributed to different gods were imaginary and in actual practice, were not generally used by the soldiers. Even Kauṭilya²¹⁷, a practical politician and strategist, has not mentioned them, although he refers to smaller war instruments. Both in stone reliefs and sculptures, we do not find any depiction of these weapons, along with other weapons, which were used on the battle fields.

The Mānushāni or the human-war-instruments were of

212. Bishma. 32.53-54.

213. Drona. 61.7.

214. Ibid. 50.1-3.

215. Karna. 29.26.

216. Bhishma. 116.37-39.

217. K.A.2.18.

different types, and were used on the battle-fields. Most of them can be noticed in the stone reliefs and sculptures. The sword was very useful in all situations and a soldier could fall back upon it when the supply of weapons became exhausted. As to the comparative importance of bow and the sword, the epic regards the former as the best weapon, but it does not devalue the importance of sword, as according to it, if the bow is broken, the horses are killed, then the soldier may defend himself with the help of a sword, and even a single swords-man, can resist successfully a host of soldiers equipped with club and Śakti²¹⁸.

The spears and Javelins also were popular weapons. The technical term for spear is Śakti²¹⁹. It was of different types. It was a terrible weapon, made of iron, sometimes adorned with gold and bells. The Kunta belongs to the spear class of weapons. The Tomara was in all probability, a Javelin having a very sharp point²²⁰. The Prāsa also belongs to this class ; but in the epic, its nature is not clear except that it was sharp and broad²²¹. The Bhindipāla²²² also may belong to this general group of spears, though information regarding it is lacking. Numerous illustrations of spears and Javelins, in stone relief and sculpture, indicate the popular use of these war-weapons.

Bows and arrows are very old weapons and they were probably invented by king Prithu²²³. The shaft of an arrow was usually made of reed, sometimes of wood or bamboo. The arrows were feathered for the purpose of stabilising its flight. The heads of the arrows were tipped with the bones of monkeys, cows and elephants²²⁴.

218. SP. 160.2-4.

219. Aranyaka. 157.42, Drona. 29.16=18.

220. Bhishma. 44.13-15.

221. Adi. 19.12.

222. Bhishma. 44.13-25.

223. SP. 160.81-82.

224. Drona. 163.11-12.

Yamtras were mechanic war weapons which were established on the walls and gateways of the city. The fort of Dvārakā was well provided with Yamtras²²⁵. There were treatises on them²²⁶. The epic does not refer to different types of the Yamtras, but Kauṭilya informs us that there were 10 types of immovable, and 16 types of movable Yamtras. Gadā, Triśūla, Mudgara, Chakra and Śataghni are included in the list of the Chalayaṁtaras²²⁷.

Battle-axe or Paraśu, known by other names such as the Paraśvadha, Kulis and Kuṭhāra, also was a popular weapon. Pāsa or noose was used in order to tie the foot of the foe²²⁸. These are some of the main weapons which are referred to by the epic, but an exhaustive list may be prepared by including all the types such as Prāsa, Śakti, Śūla, Paraśvadha, Pattisa, Pāsa, Rishṭi, Bhuśunḍi, Śataghni, Mūsala, Gadā, bow and arrows, sword, Parigha, Chakra, Bhindipāla, Tomara, Mudgara, Kshepaṇiya, Lośhṭha, Laguḍa, Ayoguda, Aśmanah, Nakhara, Aṅkusa, Pratoda, Kunta, Hala and so on²²⁹.

Besides these offensive weapons, the epic mentions some of the other weapons, especially used for the defensive purposes. Armours or Kavachas were used for protecting the bodies of soldiers, elephants and horses²³⁰. Siratrāṇa or the helmets and Aṅgulitra also were used by soldiers for the protection of their heads and fingers²³¹. Shields were used for their protection. The term Charma has been sometimes used for the shield²³².

225. Aranyaka. 16.5.

226. Sabha. 5.110.

227. K.A. 2.18.

228. Aranyaka. 42.27.28.

229. Bhishma. 44.13-15, 72.5-6, 114.2-3, Drona. 25.55, 29.16-18, 35.23-25, 162.14, Karna. 16.9-10, Aranyaka. 21.32, 22.2, 23.28-30, 37.6. Chapter 157.

230. Aranyaka. 126.31, Virata. 30.12, SP. 101.6,

231. Asvamedhika. 85.11, Virata. 5.1.

232. SP. 101-8, Aranyaka. 120.7-8.

The weapons were stored in the Āyudhāgāras²³³ which were built inside the city walls. Kauṭilya refers to the Āyudhāgārādhyaksha but in the epic there is no any reference to such officer. It may be assumed that manufacture, repair, distribution, accumulation and maintenance of the weapons were under the charge of an officer. The weapons were supplied to the soldiers on the battle field. They were carried in bullock-carts, each driven by eight bulls²³⁴. Karna had advised Duryodhana to appoint Śalya as his Sārathī. Besides, he advised him to manage for maintaining the regular supply of weapons²³⁵ to the army.

233. Ibid. 59.46, 69.52-56, 97.12.

234. Karna. 15.28.

235. Ibid. 22.51. See also P.K. Dixit, *Mahabharata Men—Rajyavyasa* vashtra, pp. 168-71.

Chapter XII

INTER-STATE RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

The state is established and made to exist by defending it from external aggressions and internal dangers. But, is it possible for the king to defend it only with the help of the armed forces? Is it possible for him to continue the same policy towards his foes for ever? The time and place factors change the circumstances, so, he has to follow different types of policies towards his allies, enemies, mediators and neutrals. He has to maintain relations with other states by adopting suitable policies towards them.

The destruction of the enemy has been regarded as one of the means for the protection of the state.¹ Besides this, king should know as to who are loyal to him, and who are his real allies and enemies².

The epic refers to the Trivarga³, consisting of Kshaya (Decandence), Sthāna (Stangnation) and Vṛiddhi (Agumentation). The king's duty is to act in such a way so that his state may become prosperous. So, he has to be expert in the matters of Trivarga. The king prospers when he is superior to his foe, remains the same when he is equal in strength, but declines when he is inferior to him in power, so, it is his duty to work for the prosperity of his state. But, this is possible only when he tries to suppress them⁴, and further prevent them from gaining strength. The epic recommends an aggressive military policy for the sheer stability and progress of the kingdom. What the king has to do for realising the above objective? He

1. SP. 58.4-12.

2. Ibid. 94.35, 104.31-32.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. 57.18.

should gather three-fold power⁵, based on the sovereign power (Prabhuśakti), zeal (Utsāha) and diplomacy (Mantra Śakti). Kauṭilya also has mentioned these powers, and according to him, the possession of treasury and a strong army are real strength of the sovereignty. Martial power implies the physical strength, but power of deliberation refers to intellectual strength⁶. These are some of the means which help in state's prosperity on the one hand, and they contribute to the decline of the enemy on the other.

The Mandala Theory

The Mandala theory is a highly developed system of the Inter-state relations. The earliest reference to it is found in the Kauṭily's Arthaśāstra. The ancient Indian political thinkers had placed the ideology of Digvijaya before the kings for political unity of the country, and establishment of an all India empire. This ideal of Digvijaya was realised by performing the Aśvamedha and Rājasūya which necessitated the conquest of the whole country. But, the war has been condemned as it causes destruction to the human life. So, in order to minimise the chances of war, and for maintaining a judicious balance of power, the Mandala theory was especially formulated. A Mandala consists of 12 kings, radiating from the most ambitious of them all, technically known as the Vijigishu (conquest seeker). This is known as the Mandala Dvādaśarājikā⁷ or the circle of 12 kings, which has been referred to in the original code of Brahmā. The epic does not discuss this matter, but in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya⁸ it has been discussed in detail. It comprises, besides the

5. Ibid.

6. K.A. 6.2.

7. SP. 69.70.

8. K.A. 6.2.

Vijigishu in the centre, (1) a set of five kings in the front functioning alternately as his foes and friends respectively, but with receding degrees of this relationship according to their distance from the Vijigishu (2) another set of four kings similarly functioning alternately as his foes and friends in the fashion just described above. The third set included Madhyma or the mediator, and the Udāsina or the neutral kings.

The list of the princes comprising the Maṇḍala is as follows :—

1. Vijigishu : the conquest seeker in the centre.
2. *Ari*. : the enemy in front of No. 1.
3. *Mitra* : Ally in front of No. 2.
4. *Arimitra* : Ally of No. 2 in the front of No. 3.
5. *Mitramitra* : Ally of No. 3 in the front of No. 4.
6. *Arimitramitra* : Ally of No. 4 in front of No. 5.
7. *Pārshṇigrāha* : Rearward enemy in the rear of No. 1.
8. *Ākranda* : Enemy of No. 7 in the rear of No. 7.
9. *Pārshṇigrāhasāra* : Ally of No. 7 in the rear of No. 8.
10. *Ākrandasāra* : Ally of No. 8 in the rear of No. 9.
11. *Madhyama* : Intermediate king adjoining No. 1.

According to Kauṭilya, the Madhyama or intermediate king occupies a territory close to both the conqueror and his immediate enemy in front, and he is capable of helping both the kings, whether united or disunited or of resisting either of them individually.⁹

12. According to Kauṭilya, Udāsina or the neutral king adjoining No. 11 is situated beyond the territory of any of the above kings. He is very powerful and is capable of helping the enemy, the Vijigishu and the Madhyama kings together or individually or of resisting any of them individually.¹⁰

The epic cites the views of political thinkers regarding the 72 Prakṛitis of the Maṇḍala.¹¹ Kauṭilya also refers to them.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Aśrama, 11.6.

He thinks that every member in the circle of kings has five elements, namely the minister, territory, fort, treasury and army,¹² so, there are sixty Prakritis of 12 kings, and there are 72 Prakritis in all.

In the inter-state relations, the Mitra and Ari are the main aspects. The question may arise as to who are the allies and foes? Regarding the allies, much has been discussed elsewhere in this work in connection with the Saptāṅga.¹³ The opposite aspect of ally is the enemy, and this also has been discussed in the same context. But, it is to be noted that friendship and enmity are not permanent affairs, rather they are based on the fulfilment of self interest, hence the king should be very cautious even from his friends.¹⁴

Such is the famous category of Mandala, which is one of the most notable contributions of the ancient Indians to the development of the world political thought. It makes a stable and even stereotyped grouping of a number of allied and hostile, as well as neutral states around the central figure of an ambitious potentate.¹⁵

This concept of Mandala envisages the most usual types of relationship substituting between different states. The principles of the Mandala theory are true in many cases, but it is not necessary that in all the circumstances and conditions these must be true. It is not necessary that the immediate two states should be inimical to each other and follow a policy of aggrandisement. The circumstances may compel them to change their enmity into friendship. Besides this, the state situated at different places in Mandala determine their attitude in relation to their neighbours in times of war according to their own convenience or in accordance with the

12. K.A., 6.2.

13. Supra, Ch. 4.

14. ŚP., 136. 132-135.

15. Ghosala, U. N., The system of Inter-State Relations and of foreign Policy in the early Arthaśāstra State, A.I., p. 137-138.

principle of expediency. *As for example, if war broke out between the Vijigishu and his immediate neighbour in front, then, it was not necessary for the Mitra to come to the rescue of Vijigishu, though theoretically the Mitra should come to help him. The main reason being that he determined his attitude after taking into consideration his own advantages and disadvantages, and certain other factors, such as the power and strength of the foe of his friend and chances of success of Vijigishu. So, he remained neutral and did not adopt an attitude of hostility towards the Ari of the Vijigishu some what dogmatically, as that was considered unrealistic.¹⁶

Similarly, in certain circumstances, the Udāsina and Madhyama kings, adopted an attitude of indifference and negligence towards parties to a conflict or towards any war raging among some states. Whether a state was neutral or not was to be judged from its attitude, and not from its geographical position.¹⁷ A sovereign decided to attack other territories taking into considerations the strength of his foe and the assistance to be found from his own allies. The epic, therefore, always instructs the kings never to wage war against the superior enemy, but to remain on friendly terms with him in order to retain their existence.¹⁸ The Mahābhārata presents some examples of the principles of the Maṇḍala theory. The Matsya king Virāṭa, who was the immediate neighbour of the Kauravas, was their enemy. But the Trigartas, the immediate neighbours of king Virāṭa were friends of the Kauravas.¹⁹ But, it was not always true. It is known that the Kshudraka and the Mālavas were the immediate neighbours but they are termed together as the Ksudra-kamālava²⁰ who were always on friendly terms.

16. Chatterjee, Hiralal, ILIRAI, p. 136.

17. Ibid., op.cit., p. 136.

18. Śalya., 3.42.

19. Chaps. 29-62.

20. Sabhā. 48.13.

Upāya :

In the circle of kings, the Vijigishu had to act wisely and for the achievement of his objectives he had not to take the help of armed forces, because it was considered dangerous and destructive. Then, what were the remedies to win over the foes ? The epic advances some methods to subdue them, and they are known as the *Upāya* or remedies which were prescribed for dealing with contingencies.

Generally, there are references to the *Chatushtaya*²¹ or the four-fold policy consisting of *Sāma*, *Dāna*, *Bheda* and *Danḍa*. A ruler had to conquer his foes either by following the policy of conciliation or persuasive measures, or by offering financial or military assistance or by creating dissensions or by the use of force. But, how these are to be applied to the foes ? The king should apply all these methods or the remedies one by one, to conquer an enemy or he may use them all at a time against the same enemy. From the practical point of view, the policy of persuasion or pacification is the best, as it does not cause loss in men or money. But in case of failure, after the application of all the three remedies, he is advised to use *Danḍa* or attack the enemy in order to conquer²² him. Manu also advises the king to adopt such steps which may help him in causing the prosperity of the country and at the same time make it free from the onslaughts of the enemies.²³

The policy of pacification was the best one, and at first, the kings attempted to win over the foe with its help. Generally, it was used in pacifying the superior foe as the epic instructs the weak kings to pacify the superior ones by pleasing them with folded hands, and speaking sweet words to them. The weaker kings, in order to pacify and win over the mighty ones, should narrate ancient stories to them in

21. ŚP. 138.7-9.

22. Ibid. 138.7-9 ; Udyoga. 33.43.

23. Manu. 7.109.

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their sorrows.²⁴ The epic presents some examples of the application of Sāma. For instance, Kṛishna had applied it in case of the Kauravas by narrating many persuasive things in the Kaurava-court and had tried to convince them of the reality.²⁵

The policy of Dāna is applied by powerful and rich countries for winning over small and backward countries. They offer financial and military assistance to them and strengthen their position in the world politics. The epic also refers to the use of this policy in the same context. The king should be very cautious from his foes, so that they may not offer bribe to his military officers and ministers in order to win over them. Besides, a weak king should offer his Kosha and even the army in order to save his life from the cruel and superior enemies. Sometime a powerful king, by offering military assistance to a weak and needy king, made him his ally. Bhārdvāja thinks that in order to save one's own life during distress, a weak king should promise to offer many things to the superior enemy, but after gaining strength, he should not offer any thing.²⁶

The policy of creating dissension was a very effective remedy to weaken the strength of the foe. It is the best type of policy to be followed in order to break the republics²⁷ as they become its easy victims. The king despatched their spies and other persons to create dissension in the enemy's camp by bribing the officers of the state or by creating difference of opinion among the ministers, so, the king has been advised to guard against this happening. The epic indicates as to how the policy of Bheda should be applied in case of the enemy. The king should send his spies to the country of the foe in order to detach the people from him by pointing

24. ŚP. 138.18.

25. Udyoga. 149.7.

26. ŚP. 138.31.

27. Ibid. chapters 82.108, K.A. Adhikaraṇa. 11.

out evils under his rule.²⁸ He should expel his own persons depriving them of their possessions only for show to others. But, he should send them to the country of the enemy creating dissension among the men of foe.²⁹ Besides, it has been suggested that the weaker king may surrender before the mighty one and serve him while remaining in the court, but in the meanwhile, he should create dissension in his camp by making friends for himself, and on getting appropriate opportunity, he should attempt to destroy him or regain his independence.³⁰

The epic presents some instances of the application of Bheda. Kṛishna, after failing in his mission to establish peace with the Kauravas by the application of Sāma, applied the policy of Bheda in order to create dissension in their camp by narrating supernatural deeds performed by the Pāṇḍavas.³¹ Vidulā, the mother of prince Sañjaya, while instigating him to fight and regain the lost state from the king of Sind, advised him to create dissension in the enemy's camp. But, how was it to be done? She advised him to offer presents and speak sweet words to those persons in the camp of his enemy, who were angry with him, or desired something from him, or who were made poor and weak being deprived of their possessions or who were not in his favour or were his rivals.³² She advised him to create dissension among his persons in such a way that all of them could come to his side, leaving enemy's camp completely isolated. He had to act like the whirlwind in order to separate the persons of the enemy's camp.³³

This type of policy breaks the total strength of the enemy, hence he is broken easily. Its importance was realised by the Chinese political thinker and strategist Sun-Tzu³⁴ (5th

28. Ibid. 104.40.

29. Ibid. 104.42.

30. Ibid. 106.1-10.

31. Udyoga. 148.8-13.

32. Ibid. 133.29-32.

33. Ibid. 133.30-33.

34. Sun-Tzu quoted by Hamiet, *The Home Front*, Hindustan Times, Delhi, 14.8.1963.

century B.C.) who in his book on the Art of War has propounded the theory that supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting. He believed that the master conqueror frustrated his foe's plans and broke up his alliances. He created cleavages between sovereign and ministers, superiors and inferiors, commanders and sub-ordinates. His spies and agents were active every where gathering informations, showing dissension and nurturing subversion. The enemy was isolated and demoralised. Thus, without battle, his army was conquered, his cities taken, and his state overthrown. This thinker had realised that an indispensable preliminary battle was to attack the mind of the enemy.

The policy of the application of Danda is the last resort to be taken by the kings in order to subdue the enemy, if all the three remedies failed. According to militant politician Bhāradvāja, it is the best type of remedy to be adopted³⁵ by the king. Krishna, after failing to conquer the Kauravas by the application of Sāma, Dāna, and Bheda, thought to use the fourth Upāya namely the Danda against them.³⁶

The epic, besides referring to the four Upāyas mentions the fifth one, Upekshā or neutrality or negligence.³⁷ It was to be followed, perhaps to save oneself from two superior powers engaged in disputes. Sometimes, Upekshā is substituted with Balikarma³⁸ or offering of taxes to the superior king as a token of the acceptance of his overlordship. Besides these, the epic again refers to the Saptopāya³⁹ but the constituents have not been enumerated. Generally, it is assumed that it consisted of Chatrupāya being added with the use of Mantra, medicine or herbs and magic in order to subdue the enemy.⁴⁰

35. ŚP. 138.7-9.

36. Udyoga. 148.8-13, 16-17.

37. Aranyaka. 149.42, ŚP. 59.35-36.

38. Virāṭa. 28.11.

39. Sabhā. 5.21.

40. Ibid. (G.P), p. 677, F.N. 2.

These three are mentioned as well in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya.⁴¹

The king should apply the four-fold remedies in order to win over the enemies, but does it mean that these should be applied without any consideration? Any policy to be adopted should be judged from the principle of time and place factors.⁴² He should act when the proper occasions come.⁴³ He should not make haste in adopting method to oust the enemy and no rigid principle should be followed for his destruction.⁴⁴ Favourable conditions always do not come and wait for a king, so, he should not miss even a single proper opportunity for the enemy's destruction.⁴⁵ Friendship and enmity are not of permanent nature. They are everchanging as they are based on the fulfilment of self-interest, so, keeping this in mind, he should utilise the opportunities. All the remedies should be applied at proper time and place so that the success may be achieved.

The art of diplomacy was highly appreciated. It has been suggested that an arrow discharged by an archer kills only one person, but the policy of a diplomat may uproot the whole kingdom. So, the kings preserved their army and treasury for use in extreme situations, and utilised the art of diplomacy for achieving the ends. The epic instructs the king to conceal his weakness, strike the enemy when necessary, but like a tortoise, he must keep his limbs contracted and must safeguard his interests.

The Shāḍgunyā :

The Shāḍgunyā was an essential art of diplomacy. When the measures of Sāma, Dāna, Bheda and Danḍa failed, the

41. K.A. 14th Adhikaraṇa.

42. ŚP. 104.17-18.

43. Aranyaka. 6.19.

44. Ibid, 33.49.

45. ŚP. 104.17-20.

king had to follow a very judicious policy towards his enemies. The epic asserts that the king's prosperity depends upon the proper implementation of the sixfold policy.⁴⁶ What are the constituents of the Shāḍguṇya? Like Kauṭilya, the epic refers to constituents namely Saṁdhi (alliance), Vighraha (war), Yāna (march of the army), Āsana (neutrality), Dvaidhibhāva (dual policy, verbal surrender with treachery at heart) and Samāśraya (seeking protection by a weak prince from a powerful king).⁴⁷ Vāṭavyādhi thinks that actually there are two Guṇas namely the Saṁdhi and Vighraha.⁴⁸ A careful study of the constituents shows that Yāna and Samāśraya differ from their respective prototypes Vighraha and Saṁdhi only in degree but not in kind, while Dvaidhibhāva is a combination of Saṁdhi and Vighraha. Kauṭilya supports the view of Vāṭavyādhi and says that Saṁdhi and Vighraha in different changed circumstances are known as the other four Guṇas.⁴⁹

The first constituent of the Shāḍguṇya is Saṁdhi, which according to Kauṭilya is Paṇabandha or the agreement between the kings.⁵⁰ The epic refers to its three types namely Hina, Madhyama and Uttama which originate from Bhaya (fear), Satkāra (respect) and Vitta (wealth).⁵¹ It may be asked that in what circumstances it is to be concluded? The epic asserts that a king should establish alliance with the invading king, if he is superior in military strength and treasury along with other aspects, as a weak king cannot stay in struggle against a superior enemy.⁵² Alliance is to be concluded when the enemy is equal in strength, but should wage war when he

46. Udyoga. 33.43, ŚP. 69.64.

47. ŚP. 69.65-66.

48. K.A. 7.1.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. ŚP. 59.37.

52. Ibid. 69.14-15; Śalya. 3.42; Aśrama. 11.7-8, 12.1-2; Sabhā.

is inferior to him.⁵³ Besides, the king should establish alliance with his enemy when the internal situation of his state is not in order or when there is dissension among the officials, external foes are encroaching on him, the Kosha is exhausted and matters of state's policy are disclosed to the enemies.⁵⁴

The epic advances the theory that only fools do not conclude alliance with superior enemies. The king prospers when he establishes alliance with the foes in order to achieve his objectives.⁵⁵ The story of cat and rat indicates that alliance should be made even with the traditional and natural enemy for the protection of one's own life. Its conclusion is easier when the enemy is facing equal dangers from a third party.⁵⁶ But, Śukra gives a dictum that while concluding an alliance with a stronger enemy, one should be always cautious from him.⁵⁷

What should be the terms and conditions of alliance? The state is not a commercial⁵⁸ commodity, hence, it should not be handed over to the enemy. Alliance should be concluded only with those kings who are virtuous, enthusiastic and righteous.⁵⁹ What is to be done when the enemy is wicked and wants to gain something from him? In such a situation, the king should establish alliance with even if he suffers some loss.⁶⁰ There are also references to the terms of alliance. When the foe is superior, an alliance may be made by offering less fertile land, gold and other metals to him, but the powerful king should try to take more of fertile land, gold and other precious metals from the weaker one. Even

53. Śalya. 3.42.

54. ŚP. 129.9-10.

55. Ibid. 137.17.

56. Ibid. Ch. 136.

57. Ibid. 136.184-185.

58. Ibid. 25.15.

59. Ibid. 69.16.

60. Ibid. 129.5.

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the weaker king's son should be kept as hostage.⁶¹ These terms are also mentioned in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya.⁶² While establishing alliance the parties should keep in their view the loss, gain, protection of the self interests, accumulation of wealth and other things.⁶³ The epic instructs the kings never to hand over themselves to the superior enemy. One's own life must be protected even by offering Kosha and army to the enemy and even by discarding his capital town, as every lost thing may be gained if the life is protected.⁶⁴

The alliances were solemnised before good persons and were not to be violated.⁶⁵ Bhāradvāja thinks that even after the conclusion of alliance, the weaker king should not have faith in the superior king. He must remain cautious from him, and, on getting opportunity, he must try to gain his lost things or prestige by giving a crushing defeat to the enemy.⁶⁶ Kauṭilya furnishes more details regarding Saṁdhi-Karma and Saṁdhi-Moksha.⁶⁷

The epic refers to the alliance between Drupada and Droṇāchārya in which the former's Pañchāla country was divided between those two on the half-half basis as the latter had defeated the former.⁶⁸ This is an example of the Bhūmisāṁdhi. Duryodhana had concluded on alliance with the Trigartas in order to capture the cattle-wealth of Virāṭa.⁶⁹

According to Kauṭilya, Vighraha is an offensive operation,⁷⁰ hence it necessitates hostility and actual operation with an

61. Aśrama. 11.8-10.

62. K.A. 7.3 ; 10, 18.

63. ŚP. 120.39.

64. Ibid. 129.5-8.

65. Aranyaka. 35.14.

66. ŚP. 138.37.

67. K.A. 7.17.

68. Adi. Chaps. 121-122, 128, 12-18.

69. Virāṭa. Ch. 29.

70. K.A. 7.1.

intention to harm the enemy. What are the causes of war? Why persons fight, and why do they not adopt other methods to settle their problems? These are some of the basic questions. The epic advances many causes for the outbreak of wars. The root cause of war is avarice⁷¹ for gaining more things. A powerful king being motivated by the sense of avarice wants to capture the possessions of others with the help of his arms. But, others also do not like to be destroyed so they resist, hence, war is inevitable. The main cause of the Bhārata battle was avarice as Duryodhana has refused to offer due share to the Pāṇḍavas who rightly regarded him as Dasyu.⁷² Most of the battles were fought due to avarice. Here, we find the beginning of war for power which Schuman has termed as the power⁷³ and prestige psychology of war.

Jealousy⁷⁴ also is responsible for the outbreak of battle. The root of foreign policy is that the state may prosper when other states are weak, otherwise, being stronger, they create menace to the existence of others. So, it was policy of kings to destroy the prosperity of other states, hence, wars took place. Duryodhana could not see the prosperity of the Pāṇḍavas, which he had seen on the occasion of the performance of the Rājasūya, so, he requested his father to take steps for their destruction,⁷⁵ which ultimately resulted in the Bhārata war.

The very dictum of the thinkers that even a weaker enemy must not be neglected, was the cause of wars.⁷⁶ The diplomat kings, realising the importance of this dictum, took appropriate action against the enemy, hence the result was the outbreak of war.

71. Udyoga. 29.27.

72. Ibid. 29.28-29, 30.47.

73. Schuman, International Government, p. 492.

74. Sabhā. 50.15.

75. Ibid. 50.16.

76. Ibid. 58.17 ; Sabhā. 50.20-24.

Mostly the battles are fought with a distinct desire to achieve territorial gain.⁷⁷ The Kshatriyas, without having any care for their life, fight battles for gaining new territory. But, why they wish to occupy the earth or extend their territory? The earth is the root cause of prosperity, hence its possessor⁷⁸ is the master of all. It is like the Kāmdhenu⁷⁹—all wish fulfilling cow, and the kings sacrifice even their lives for its protection and possession. It is like a piece of flesh for which the Kshatriyas fight like dogs.⁸⁰ The impotents cannot rule over the earth, hence, the epic gives emphasis on the military build up, which ultimately results in war.⁸¹

Personal enmity also, sometimes, causes war. The idea behind this was to take revenge. The main reasons for the battles between Drupada and sage Droṇa,⁸² and among the Bhārgava-Brāhmaṇas and the Haihaya-Kshatriyas⁸³ were personal enmity. In those wars, Drupada had to give up half of his territory, and the Bhārgavas and Haihayas had to suffer from massacre and other consequences of war.

Śrī or wealth also is the cause of wars. The Devas and Dānavas fought for a long time for it. Śrī is a technical term which symbolises prosperity. In actual practice also, the kings fought battles for the prosperity of the state, but it was true in case of powerful states only. The battles were fought for capturing the army and Kosha of the enemy in order to weaken him. The main cause of the battle between the Matsya king and the Kaurava-Trigartas was the cattle wealth of the former which the latter wanted to capture.⁸⁴

77. Bhīshma. 5.3-4.

78. Ibid. 5.5, 20-21; Mukherjee, T. B., *Inter-State Relations in Ancient India*, p. 54.

79. Ibid. 10.69-70.

80. Ibid. 10.71-72; ŚP. 7.10.

81. ŚP. 14.13.

82. *Adi. Chaps.* 121-122, 128.

83. ŚP. 34.13-17.

84. *Virāṭa, Goharaṇa Parva, Chaps.*, 29-62.

The kings went on expeditions for realising Bali and Kara from the defeated kings.⁸⁵ Those augmented their Kosha.

The women also were the causes of war. In ancient Indian social system, the Rākshasa type of marriage was approved for the Kshatriyas, according to which, they could kidnap girls for performance of marriage with them. This caused wars as the girls being the symbol of prestige were the objects to be protected by the fathers prior to their marriage. The cause of war between Bhīshma and the king of Kāśī was the kidnapping of his daughters by the former.

The epic advances many causes for the outbreak of wars, and it seems that those were appropriate and justified. But, the question arises whether the epic approves war? War, according to the epic, has been regarded as one of the means for the prosperity of the state, in so far as it removes the enemy from the path of progress.⁸⁶ But, one may still raise the question whether the king should wage wars for the fulfilment of his objectives? According to the theorists of the epic, war is the last resort, and prior to waging it, the king should adopt other Upāyas namely conciliation, gift and dissension for achieving his objective.⁸⁷ A wise king wishing to rule over the state, must always discard the war.⁸⁸ Kauṭilya and Manu also are of the same opinion.⁸⁹

But, why the wars are to be avoided? It has been argued that in war the victory is uncertain as it depends on luck⁹⁰, so it is not desirable to wage war. Besides, victory obtained with the help of war, has been considered as of the worst type, and the most sinful act.⁹¹ The epic instructs that war should not be waged to gain victory, on the contrary other

85. Supra. Ch. 9.

86. ŚP. 94.24.

87. Ibid. 103.16, 22.

88. Ibid. 69.22.

89. K.A. 7.16 ; Manu. 7.198-199.

90. Droṇa. 133.64.

91. Manu. 7.199 ; ŚP. 103.17, 95.9 ; Virāṭa. 44.2.

means should be applied for that purpose, as victory gained by conciliation and gift is of the best type, and by Bheda is of the middle type, but, victory gained by Danḍa is of the worst type as it is very destructive.⁹² What are the reasons, due to which war has been condemned? It is very destructive to the Kshatriyas, it causes world-destruction, and its reasons are not to be sought, as even very insignificant matters also lead to grave consequences.⁹³ It is so destructive that all the beings fear from war.⁹⁴ Besides this, it is more expensive, and finally leads to annihilation.⁹⁵ In no case, war is to be praised, as the parties on war have no peace. It causes decline in fame and happiness to the enemies.⁹⁶ On these grounds, Vidura had advised Dhṛitarāshṭra to persuade his sons for establishing peace.⁹⁷ No doubt, the victor gains after much loss, but the worst sufferers are his own brethren. Yudhisṭhira achieved victory after killing his kinsmen, but in his view, it also led him to hell.⁹⁸ The epic asserts that though wealth is obtained by waging war, but surely, it is destructive and has many evils, hence, it is better to remain poor than to have wealth by achieving victory after much bloodshed.⁹⁹ The ancestors of Paraśurāma have been shown as instructing him not to hold weapon, as it is very destructive to do so.¹⁰⁰ Dhṛitarāshṭra knew of all the evils originating from wars, still he was unable to persuade his sons to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas.¹⁰¹ Many evils or bad consequences take birth from wars and among them the main thing is the

92. Bhīṣma. 4.32.

93. Sabhā. 11.69.

94. ŚP. 103.25.

95. Ibid. 82.18.

96. Udyoga. 37.38.

97. Ibid. 62.14-15.

98. Anuśāsana. 57.1-4.

99. Udyoga. 142.13.

100. Ibid. 186.12.

101. Ibid. 156.4-5.

destruction of life and property.¹⁰² Due to all these evils it should not be waged, hence Sañjaya had advised Yudhishthira not to declare war against the Kauravas, even if they did not give his rightful share in the Kuru kingdom. It is better to live on begging than to get wealth by waging war.¹⁰³

The thinkers of the epic, like their modern counter-parts, put a question as to what is good in wars¹⁰⁴ ? Answering this vital question they assert that war is always full of evils.¹⁰⁵ In war, one is not sure of ones victory.¹⁰⁶ The parties involved are either defeated or achieve victory but destruction is inevitable. On account of these reasons, Yudhishthira has considered it as sinful. Many brave soldiers are killed, the victor also suffers and the defeated king earns dis fame in the world.¹⁰⁷ War also develops sense of revenge, and gives birth to wars in future. No parmanent solution can be achieved through war rather it creates problems and further prepares the ground for sufferings in future.¹⁰⁸ Further, the kings who are at war do not have mental peace. They are always restless for fear of being defeated. Even the victorious king earns defamation in the world. The matter however, does not end here. The enmity continues from generation to generation.¹⁰⁹ So, on this ground, Yudhishthira thinks that it is better to discard his claim on the legal share in the Kuru kingdom than to wage war against the Kauravas, as war is nothing but like the fight of dogs. As the dogs seeing a piece of flesh shake their tails, bark at each other and showing their teeth fight among themselves, but the piece of flesh is eaten by the most power-

102. Bhishma. 4.32.

103. Udyoga. 26.3, 27-28, 27.2-3, 22.

104. Ibid. 70.45.

105. Ibid. 70.49.

106. Ibid. 70.46.

107. Ibid. 70.52-54.

108. Ibid. 70.58-59.

109. Ibid. 70.59-62 ; 70.63-66.

ful dog, likewise, the kings also fight for a piece of land and suffer much, but the powerful one rules over the earth.¹¹⁰

In spite of the condemnation of war, the Bhārata-battle was fought. The epic justifies the war on many grounds. Every person should follow his Dharma. It is the sanctioned Dharma of the Kshatriyas to fight, as for them, there is no greater or superior duty than to fight on the battle-field and kill the enemy. It does not matter even if they have to sacrifice their lives in discharging their duties.¹¹¹ It is the Kshatriya's duty to resist invasions, otherwise as Bṛihaspati thinks, such a non-resisting king perishes away very soon.¹¹² It is the duty of the Kshatriya to fight battle and this has been justified by Lord Kṛishṇa while encouraging Arjuna to discharge his duty on the battle-field of the Kurukshetra. Kṛishṇa says, "If you will not wage war, such a righteous war, then abandoning your duty and losing your reputation you will incur sin, many people will pour undying infame on you, and infame, brought on a man enjoying popular esteem, is worse than death." According to Him, every Kshatriya should fight without caring for life, and it is beneficial in all cases, as He says to Arjuna "Either slain in battle you will attain the heaven, or gaining victory you will enjoy sovereignty of the earth, so, arise; determined to fight. Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, get ready for the fight, fighting thus, you will not get sin".¹¹³ So, the Kshatriyas had to fight. The performance of one's duties leads to no sin, and warfare being the duty of the Kshatriya, is a moral duty to be discharged.

The Kshatriya has been created for the protection of Dharma and imparting justice to all. So, the Pāṇḍavas fought

110. Ibid. 70.68-72.

111. Bhishma. 24.20-32; Aranyaka. 36.34, 154.22-23, 198.24; Virāṭa. 20.28; Strī. 2.11, 10.9.

112. ŚP. 23.14-15.

113. Bhishma. 24.33-38.

the Bhārata battle for the rightful purpose, and for the protection of the Dharma. War is not bad when it is fought for the just causes. One should fight for regaining the lost territory forcibly¹¹⁴ occupied by the enemy. The Pāṇḍavas fought the Bhārata battle for the same, hence they did not commit sin.

Arjuna did not like to fight the Bhārata battle fearing the probable death of his kinsmen and near relatives as he did not see any good in killing them, and wondered that how one could be happy by killing¹¹⁵ one's own men? He thought that war causes the destruction of the families and the races. Traditions also come to an end. With the predominance of vice, women of the family become corrupt, and it leads to the intermixture of castes. The family traditions also came to an end and those who have lost family traditions dwell in hell for a long time.¹¹⁶

The theorists of the epic have tried to solve these problems from a metaphysical point of view. Regarding the confusion in society caused by war, especially moral confusion among womenhood, and destruction of the Kuladharmas, Kṛishṇa advances the counter argument that it is a greatest sin on the part of the Kshatriya not to fight the battle. For Arjuna, war was a necessity, an essential instrument of progress, and a source of order in the society. Peace generally led to internal corruption, but a war roused the Kshatriyas from mental indolence and lethargy, and awoke them to their sense of duty.

While advancing the metaphysical interpretation of the war, Kṛishṇa had shown his Viśvarūpa to Arjuna. He found that all the persons whom he wanted to kill were rushing towards death. He found that really, god is the destroyer of all and he had to act only as the apparent instrument to

114. Aranyaka. 34.20.

115. Bhishma. 23.24-39.

116. Ibid. 23.40-43.

kill them. He was not the real cause of their death.¹¹⁷ So, the battles must not be abandoned for the fear that some one kills his near relatives or causes death to others. It is Kāla or god who kills all.

The soul cannot be killed. It is imperishable and eternal. The destruction of body is not the destruction of soul. Death is a natural stage of the Self. Lord Kṛishṇa says to Arjuna, "How will the man, who knows this soul to be imperishable, eternal and free from birth and death, cause any one to be killed or kill any one? As a man discarding worn out clothes, takes new ones, likewise the embodied soul, casting off worn out bodies enters a new one".¹¹⁸ On this account of immortality of the soul, it is useless to be anxious for the destruction of the perishable body.

Further, the thinkers of the epic advance the view that a reasonable person does not regard himself as the doer, and such a person is not bound by moral or social rules. "He, whose mind is free from the notion of doership and whose reason is not affected by worldly objects and activities, even though he may kill all these people, he does not kill and is not bound by sin. Such a reasonable person, if he kills others for the just cause, he does not receive the fruits of his action".

Thus, the Mahābhārata had advanced the matter of the imperative necessity and justification of war on the grounds that there is no sin in war-fare if one discharges his duty after having realised the supreme soul. On account of this interpretation of the political violence, the epic occupies an important and unique position in the political and philosophical tradition of our country. Aśoka has also condemned war almost on the same grounds on which the epic has condemned it. Wars result in death, killing and other types of sufferings. But, Aśoka has not discussed the problem of

117. Ibid. 33.5-34.

118. Ibid. Ch. 24.

political violence. He was influenced by the teachings of Buddha, so he condemned every type of Himsā whether for the just or unjust cause. The epic advocating the cause of Brāhmanical religion and socio-political and philosophical teachings, justifies political violence in so far as it is concerned with the duty of the Kshatriyas for the protection of Dharma.¹¹⁹

Regarding the types of war, the epic refers to the Ārya-yuddha or Dharma-yuddha, in which all the rules of war were observed. Even dangerous weapons were not used and all the treacherous¹²⁰ means were discarded. The opposite form of Dharma-Yuddha was Apraśasta-Yuddha in which the rules of fighting were not observed and all the evil methods¹²¹ were used for achieving victory. The former type of war may be equated with the Prakāśayuddha, and the latter type with the Kūṭa-yuddha as referred to by Kauṭilya in the Arthaśāstra.¹²² The epic refers to Māyāyuddha¹²³ in connection with the battle between Arjuna and the Nivātakavachas. In the present sense, to some extent, it may be equated with the guerilla warfare according to which the enemy is attacked suddenly and the invaders run away after harassing the foe. The Arthaśāstra refers to the Tushṇī-yuddha¹²⁴ according to which the enemy is subjugated through the process of intrigue by winning over the chief-officers. This may well be equated with the Mantra-yuddha¹²⁵ as referred to by him. In this type of war the king sends his men to kill the generals by poisoning them or create dissension among them by applying many other methods, legal or illegal. Though the epic does not refer to this particular term, the Tushṇī-Yuddha, has all the characteristics of

119. Varma, V. P., HPTIMF, pp. 153, 162.

120. •Droṇa. 164.6-14.

121. Ibid.

122. K.A. 7.6.10.3.

123. Aranyaka. 167.28, 168.1-30, 169.1-35.

124. K.A. 7.6.

125. Ibid. 12.2.

of the above type of war as described in the original code of Brahmā.¹²⁶

The Mahābhārata mentions that war is very destructive, but side by side it regards it as the Kshātradharmā or duty of the Kshatriya. But, the question arises whether he has to discharge this duty according to his own sweet will or he is required to observe some rules and regulations to minimise the chance of bloodshed, unjust killing, loot and murder? The war, being the Kshātradharmā, was treated as the art of game to be played according to some rules and principles.^{126a} Ideas of fairness were very much advanced, and in some respects they were as high as even the modern mind can conceive of. War always means killing and destruction, but the difference between the civilised and savage warfare lies in the methods and the extent to which the killing is allowed to go. The epic does not discuss the rules of war in a systematic manner, but refers to those in different contexts at many places. The parties at war agreed to follow the rules and this was technically known as Samaya or agreement. This was followed by the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas on the battle-field of the Kurukshetra.¹²⁷

The ancient Indian warfare was based on the moral foundations, hence the epic suggests that the unequal fighting must be strictly prohibited. The number of fighting soldiers should be equal, one soldier should fight only with one soldier of the opposite party.¹²⁸ Generally, in the Dharma-Yuddha single fighting was in practice, but there are some examples to show that this rule was not always observed as Abhimanyu, a lad of sixteen was killed by seven generals who attacked him simultaneously.¹²⁹

126. ŚP. 59.48-49.

126a. Singh, S. D., Ancient Indian Warfare, pp. 153-167.

127. Bhishma. 1.25-27.

128. Udyoga. 195.10.

129. Droṇa. 48.12-14, 21.

Equal fighting required even distribution of war instruments on both sides. The soldiers were required to observe the Astradharmā or the rules of the use of weapons. The epic advances the view that in ordinary battles the Divyāstras must not be hurled as these cause untold sufferings to the foes.¹³⁰ Besides this, those soldiers must not be struck whose weapons are broken or who do not have the armours or have discarded their weapons or have no arrows.¹³¹ Again, it has been suggested that poisonous arrows should not be discharged.¹³² Manu also prohibits the use of these weapons.¹³³ Though, it was the rule, yet it was not always observed. Abhimanyu was killed by the enemies when he had nothing to fight with.¹³⁴ It was the rule that club should not be struck on the thigh, but it was violated by Bhīma in his fight against Duryodhana.¹³⁵ Besides, equal fighting implied the use of equal numbers of different divisions of army. The foot-soldiers, horse-riders, charioteers and elephant-riders had to fight only their counter parts.¹³⁶

The idea of equal battle implies that all those persons must not be attacked who exhibit their helplessness. In this class, the following persons have been included, namely those who run away from the battle-field, lose their chariots, ask for shelter, are in dangers, have surrendered with folded hands, are wounded, whose horses and elephants are either tired or killed and those who have dismounted from their elephants, horses and chariots, and whose commander has been killed.¹³⁷

130. Aranyaka. 163.51-52, 164.18, 172.19-23.

131. Bhishma. 1.31 ; Drona. 131.3 ; Karṇa. 66.62-64 ; Śalya. 31.11-12.

132. ŚP. 96.11.

133. Manu. 7.90.

134. Drona. 118.26.

135. Śalya. 59.5-6, 62.8-9.

136. Bhishma. 1.29 ; ŚP. 96.10.

137. Ibid. 1.28, 31 ; Drona. 118.8, 131.8 ; Karṇa. 66.62-64 ; Śalya. 31.11-12, 49-50 ; Sautika. 5.11-12 ; ŚP. 96.10, 97.3 ; Aranyaka. 19.13-14 ; ŚP. 2.86, 99.46-47.

Though, these rules were set before the soldiers, yet there are ample evidences of their violation. Abhimanyu¹³⁸ was killed when he was completely helpless.

The epic lays emphasis on the use of fair means in battles, otherwise it results in destruction.¹³⁹ But, how treachery is to be avoided? It is an act of treachery to engage the soldier who is already fighting another soldier or to kill those who are sleepy, fearful or intoxicated. Besides, it is the height of treachery to attack the enemy's soldiers when they are eating, drinking, departing, entering the battlefield, unalert or reclining.¹⁴⁰ Night battle was strictly prohibited as there was much possibility of committing treachery. But, does it mean that in all the conditions, fair means are to be adopted for achieving victory? What course of action should be adopted if the enemy is adopting treacherous methods and means to destroy the opposite party? The weapons of war should be used against the enemy after alerting¹⁴¹ him, but if the latter adopts unfair means and fights treacherously, then the same methods also should be adopted against him. But, if he fights with fair means then the same fair means should also be applied against¹⁴² him. Though, these rules were observed in general, yet in many cases they were violated. Abhimanyu was killed treacherously.¹⁴³ In spite of prohibition, the epic refers to the fighting which went on at night. The heroes like Aśvat-thāmā, Kṛipavarmā and Kṛipachārya are referred to as having killed the soldiers of the Pāṇḍava-army, while they were sleeping at night.¹⁴⁴ Arjuna is referred to as having cut the hand of Bhūriśravā when he was engaged in war with Sātyaki.¹⁴⁵

138. Droṇa. 48.12-14, 118.26.

139. Bhīṣma. 1.31; ŚP. 95.13-21, 97.1-2, 23.

140. Sauptika. 5.11-12, 1.50-53; ŚP. 286.4, 101.23-26.

141. ŚP. 96.7.

142. Ibid. 96.9.

143. Droṇa. 118.26.

144. Ibid. 144.4.

145. Adi. 2.28; Droṇa. 118.3-4, 9.

The war is to be fought for the just cause and only those persons are to be killed who come prepared to carry on the fight in the battle field. The non-combatants are innocent persons hence they must not be killed. Even minor injury to such persons is to be avoided. Those persons also should not be killed who are wounded, bring war materials to the battle field and play upon musical instruments.¹⁴⁶ Weapons should not be used against the cattle wealth, Brāhmaṇas, women, fools, blinds, minors, persons infirmed by old age¹⁴⁷ and so on. But there are many instances to show that these rules also were not strictly observed. The Haihaya Kshatriyas had massacred the Bhṛigus completely and did not spare even the pregnant women.¹⁴⁸ In the Kūṭayuddha, these rules were not observed.¹⁴⁹ The epic asserts that the acts of cruelties are to be avoided. But there are some instances to prove that the Bhārata battle was not free from the acts of cruelties. A soldier from the Yudhishtira's side had cut the head of Droṇa when he was badly wounded.¹⁵⁰ Bhīma had drunk the warm blood gushing out of the chest of Duṣṣāsana when it was ripped open by him.¹⁵¹

The care of wounded and dead is one of the tests of the civilised war. The epic shows that care was given to the wounded ones, and efficient doctors and surgeons were employed in the army to cure the wounded and diseased ones.

The epic informs that the last rites of the dead were performed with proper ceremony, and customary offerings were made. The sons and wives of the departed ones were given full facilities for showing the last honour to the dead, and

146. Bhishma. 1.32.

147. Sauptika. 6.21-22 ; ŚP. 99.46-47, 286.4.

148. Adi. Chaps. 169-171.

149. ŚP. 59.48-49.

150. Droṇa. 165.45-47.

151. Karṇa. 61.6-7.

those who left no sons or wives, offerings¹⁵² were made by their nearest kin. A large number of the dead bodies were cremated in one funeral pyre, as it is seen in case of the dead bodies of the Kichakas.¹⁵³ Even the winning party disposed of the dead bodies of the enemies with promptitude and respect.¹⁵⁴ There were negations also. In the case of Duryodhana's death, it is mentioned that his knee-joints were broken and he was bleeding and left uncared for in a pool of blood with unimaginable pain. It must be regarded as a slur on the Yudhishtira's party that his royal enemy was left in this condition in wilderness.¹⁵⁵

The people were keenly interested in the termination of war. The fighting parties concluded alliances, and observed ceasefire after the victory was achieved by any of the fighting parties. The epic informs that the war was terminated, and peace established through the intervention of a Brāhmaṇa. It instructs that whenever a Brāhmaṇa appears on a battlefield with the object of negotiating peace between the contestants, fighting is to be stopped forthwith and he is to be given a chance and offered cooperation.¹⁵⁶ After the termination of war or ceasefire, there should be amity among the fighting parties.¹⁵⁷

During the war period, the parties captured many persons belonging to the opposite parties as captives. They captured the wounded soldiers, soldiers without wounds, kings, queens and other persons.¹⁵⁸ What type of treatment was given to the prisoners of war? The opposite parties should give attention to those who are wounded. Medical aid should be given to them, and after being cured, they should be sent

152. Strī. 26.21-44. Ch. 27.

153. Virāṭa. 23.7.

154. Strī. 26.22-23.

155. Śalya. 63.4-6.

156. ŚP. 97.8-10.

157. Bhīshma. 1.27-28.

158. Aranyaka. 231.6-12, 237.4.

back to their respective houses.¹⁵⁹ Generally, the war prisoners were set free¹⁶⁰ after the termination of war, but in certain cases, they were enslaved.¹⁶¹ Bhima had captured Jayadratha as the prisoner of war, and had enslaved him by forcing him to have five Śikhās on his head.¹⁶² The epic asserts that once a defeated king is made prisoner of war, he should be asked to remain as the slave of the victor for one year, and there after, he should¹⁶³ be set free. Regarding the enemy's daughters and the maid-servants, similar rules have been recommended. If a captive princess could not be persuaded to become his wife, she was to be released after one year. The maid servants also were to be told to accept slavery. In the event of their refusal, they were to be set free at the expiry¹⁶⁴ of one year's time.

Kauṭilya refers to three types of victory namely the Dharma, Lobha and Āsura vijaya. A just victor is satisfied with mere obeisance. The greedy victor is satisfied with what he can safely gain in land or money, but a demon like victor is not satisfied only by seizing the land, treasure, sons and wives of the defeated king but by taking the life of the conquered.¹⁶⁵ The epic also refers to these types of victory namely the Dharmavijaya, Arthavijaya, and Āsuravijaya.¹⁶⁶ Further, it refers to three types of victory based on the means adopted for achieving the same. The best type of victory is one which is achieved by conciliation and gift. The victory that is achieved by creating dissension is of the middle type, but the worst type of victory is that which is achieved with the help of the use of force.¹⁶⁷

159. ŚP. 95.13-21.

160. Aranyaka. 256.21.

161. Ibid. 256.10-11.

162. Ibid. 256.3-5, 9, 16-18.

163. ŚP. 97.4.

164. Ibid. 97.5.

165. K.A. 12.1.

166. ŚP. 59.38-39.

167. Bhishma. 4.32.

Booty seized in war included both movable and immovable property. The epic refers to the kings who returned to their capital cities with booty after conquering many countries. This comprised of gold and other metals, food grains, cattle-wealth, clothes and other things. King Pratardana¹⁶⁸ had seized all the movable properties of his enemy. Regarding this, the epic advances a rule that all movable properties of the foe may be seized, but not the materials meant for the performance of sacrifices. King Divodāsa did not follow this, and he occupied even the sacrificial materials of his enemy.¹⁶⁹ The victor could offer the conquered country to the Brāhmaṇas as gift, but he was not entitled to offer the possessions of Tāpasas and Śrotriyas as gift. This was followed by king Nābhāga for which he was much praised.¹⁷⁰

The Vijigishu wanted to occupy the territory of the defeated king but such practice was not looked upon with favour. Generally, the defeated kings or their sons or scions were enthroned by the victors to rule over the respective territories, if they accepted their overlordship. Arjuna has been mentioned as realising taxes from such kings and allowed them to rule over their respective territories.¹⁷¹ Vyāsa had advised Yudhishthira to go to the countries of the kings who were killed in the Bhārata battle, and enthrone their successors in the respective¹⁷² states. This clearly shows that the occupation of the conquered territory was not favoured. But, there are some instances to show that sometimes the conquered territories were occupied by the victors. Droṇa had occupied half of the territory of the Pañchāla country after defeating Drupada.¹⁷³ Dyumatsena had to take shelter in the forest

168. ŚP. 97.19.

169. Ibid. 97.16.

170. Ibid. 97.21.

171. Virāṭa. 39.11.

172. ŚP. 34.31-33.

173. Adi. 128.12-18.

as he was defeated and expelled¹⁷⁴ by his foe, and the territory of prince Sañjaya was occupied by the king of Sind.¹⁷⁵ Land, being an immovable property, was a permanent source of income. The epic asserts that after conquering the country, the victor should pacify the subjects of the former ruler by adopting various methods in order to make them loyal. He should further request them not to migrate assuring that good government¹⁷⁶ will be established in the country. Kauṭilya also refers¹⁷⁷ to this principle. In order to win over the conquered people, the victor should not interfere with the manners and customs of the people.¹⁷⁸ Kauṭilya and Manu also express similar views.¹⁷⁹

The victor realised money from the defeated people in different ways. A king desirous of raising war-loans from the people should try to impress upon them as to how the enemies after occupying their country extract money, which would¹⁸⁰ never be paid back.

Regarding Yāna much has been discussed in this work elsewhere.¹⁸¹ But one thing is to be remembered by the invading king that the enemy should be attacked after much preparation and at an appropriate time. The Mbh. does not furnish information regarding the same. Regarding Dvaiddhibhāva the epic asserts that a king inferior in power should follow this policy towards his powerful enemy. He should create faith in him by being loyal to him externally. He should speak in melodious voice, and try to discard enmity externally.¹⁸² Following this duel policy, he should try to destroy

174. Aranyaka. 283.3-4.

175. Udyoga. Ch. 133.

176. ŚP. 97.11-13.

177. K.A. 13.5.

178. ŚP. 94.5.

179. K.A. 13.5 ; Manu. 7.201.

180. ŚP. 88.24-29.

181. Supra. Ch. XI.

182. ŚP. 104.8-10.

the foe. The Śānti Parva discusses the policy of Dvaidhibhāva to be followed by the kings.

When the enemy is very powerful, the weaker king in that case should take shelter (Samāśraya) under a king superior in strength to his foe, who may protect or assist him. Besides, the weaker king has been advised to take shelter in a fort but after gaining power he should invade the enemy at an appropriate occasion. King Samvarana after being defeated by his enemy, had taken shelter in a fort on the banks of the Indus river, and from there, he invaded the enemy, and regained the lost territory.¹⁸³

Spies and Ambassadors :

The states in ancient India were inclined to regard the spies as highly indispensable and their work was considered to be of utmost importance. A king, wishing to oust his foes, could not hope to attain success, unless he employed spies to gather informations about the military installations of the enemies and the attitudes of the subjects in that country.¹⁸⁴ On account of these reasons, the epic considers the spies as the eyes of kings through whom they see.¹⁸⁵

Regarding their requisites, the Mbh. informs that such persons should be employed as spies who are well trusted and reliable, and are the sons of the soil.¹⁸⁶ Further, they should be skilful, and expert in doing good to the king.¹⁸⁷ Only those may be employed who may bear the sufferings caused by hunger, thirst, and may do some physical labour. Their outward physical appearance should be like those of fools, blinds and weak persons, but they should be very wise by

183. Adi. 89.31-42.

184. Aranyaka. 149.40 ; ŚP. 138.39.

185. Udyoga. 34.32 ; ŚP. 68.43, 87.20-21.

186. Aśrama. 9.15.

187. Virāṭa. 25.8.

nature.¹⁸⁸ Despite these requisites, a person is not to be employed as a spy, if he is not loyal person because there is every possibility of leakage of the secrets to the foes. Thus, the kings should employ loyal and wise persons¹⁸⁹ as his spies.

Regarding their types, the epic refers to the Vahiścharāḥ¹⁹⁰ or those who went to other states to gather information. This indicates that there were some other spies perhaps known as the Antaścharāḥ who worked inside the state and tried to find out the enemy's agents or the people's attitude towards the king. The spies were classified into different classes such as the Pāśhaṇḍāḥ, Tāpasāḥ, fools, deaf and blinds.¹⁹¹ They carried on their business in disguise. Kauṭilya refers to many other types and classes of spies, but the epic does not furnish details regarding this.¹⁹²

The most important duty of the spy was to get information about the military strength of the enemy.¹⁹³ It was their duty to find out the enemy's agents in the territory of their lord. They had to acquaint themselves with the roadways, and helped the army in its march to foreign countries.¹⁹⁴ Their duty was very important, but at the same time very risky. In the foreign countries, they had to work for gathering information for their employer. The question, therefore, arises as to what was the method of their working. They were sent by the king to find out the secrets of the enemy, but in such a way, that they remained unacquainted with each other.¹⁹⁵ This ensured gathering of secret information. In order to gather the necessary information they moved in disguise of different persons in the enemy's country, and visited the

188. ŚP. 69.8.

189. Ibid. 71.1-5.

190. Virāṭa. 24.5-6.

191. ŚP. 138.40 ; Udyoga. 193.56.

192. K.A. 1.10.

193. Aranyaka. 149.40-41 ; ŚP. 69.13.

194. ŚP. 101.11-12, 103.27.

195. Ibid. 138.40, 69.10.

places for recreation, places for drinking water, wine houses, gateways of the cities and the public halls, and tried to gather secret information.¹⁹⁶ Sometimes they are referred to as informing the Sūta¹⁹⁷ about gathered information to be transmitted to the king; but generally they informed the king in person.¹⁹⁸

The Ambassadors were very important agency for carrying out the inter-state-relationship. The relationship among the states depended more upon the working of the diplomats. The epic asserts that the kings should appoint efficient persons as ambassadors. Those persons should be appointed as ambassadors who follow the Śīla and are very efficient. They should be of high birth, capable and active. The Dūta was to be wise as he was to work among persons of different natures.¹⁹⁹

The story of sending the priest of Drupada as ambassador to the Kaurava court shows that much care was given to the selection of an ambassador.²⁰⁰ Similarly, the virtues and requisites of Sañjaya, the Dūta of Dhṛitarāshṭra to the Pāṇdavas, also reveal the something.²⁰¹ Vidura thinks that there are eight virtues to be sought in a person who is to be appointed as an ambassador. He should be egoless, fearless, active, kind, pure-hearted, honest, healthy²⁰² and sweet in speech. The ambassadors exchanged between kings Hiraṇyavarmā and Drupada were well versed²⁰³ in the Vedas. The ambassadors should be the persons of high birth, cultured, expert in delivering speech, skilful and their memory should be sharp.²⁰⁴

196. Ibid. 69.11-12, 50, 138.41-42.

197. Aranyaka. 48.14.

198. Aśrama. 10.6; ŚP. 87.20.

199. Udyoga. 1.23-24.

200. Ibid. 4.26, 5.18, 6.2-3.

201. Ibid. 30.3-5.

202. Ibid. 37.25.

203. Ibid. 193.22.

204. ŚP. 86.27.

The most essential duty of the ambassador was to work for the maintenance of cordial relations with the states to which they were sent. Sometimes, they were sent to invite the friendly kings to come on the occasions of the performance of sacrifices.²⁰⁵ They were sent to the capital town to inform the citizens about the victory gained by the king. King Virāṭa sent his ambassador to Virāṭanagar to inform the people there about his victory over the Trigartas.²⁰⁶ They were despatched to foreign courts to find out the intentions and motives of kings.²⁰⁷ The epic informs that the ambassadors were sent to the kings for establishing alliances for settling disputes.²⁰⁸ They were sent to convey the messages of their kings to other kings and sometimes they were sent to persuade the kings or persons not to act in a harmful manner.²⁰⁹ Dhṛitarāshṭra had sent Sañjaya to the Pāṇḍavas for persuading them not to wage war against the Kauravas.²¹⁰ Kautilya refers to the works to be done by the ambassadors in detail but the epic furnishes only scanty references in this matter.

They went to the courts of kings and conveyed messages to them.²¹¹ They had to speak to the kings sweetly in a conciliatory manner for achieving their objectives.²¹² A wise ambassador should maintain cordial relations with the courtiers, the army chief, religious persons, the wise ones, the aged ones and the citizens. In order to win over their hearts, he should speak to them in a very humble way.²¹³ For achieving the objectives, they had to create dissensions in the king's

205. Aranyaka. 242.6-7.

206. Virāṭa. 32.47-48, 50.

207. Udyoga. 1.21-23.

208. Ibid. 1.23-25.

209. Ibid. 2.4.

210. Ibid. 26.2-3.

211. Ibid. 190.20-23, 193.13-28.

212. Ibid. 2.11-12.

213. Ibid. 2.5-7.

camp. Kṛishṇa had tried to do so in order to persuade the Kauravas to give the half of the state to the Pāṇḍavas which was their due share.²¹⁴ The Bhagvad-Yāna²¹⁵ Parva contains a brilliant speech delivered by Kṛishṇa to convince the Kauravas for return of the half of the share in the Kuru state to the Pāṇḍavas.

Regarding the diplomatic privileges to be granted to them, the epic furnishes many informations. The most remarkable thing is that they were immune from being killed on the ground that they were only messengers, and uttered what they were directed to say by the sender.²¹⁶ Ulūka, an ambassador of the Kauravas provoked the Pāṇḍavas to wage war with the former.²¹⁷ The epic asserts that the king who kills an ambassador goes to the hell with his ministers and suffers from the sin equivalent to that gained by doing abortion.²¹⁸ So, the ambassadors were safe even in foreign countries and expressed their views fearlessly.

The question arises, whether they were sent on a permanent basis or not. A perusal of the subject shows that they stayed in the king's court by the time their objectives were achieved. They returned to their countries after the fulfilment of the mission for which they were sent. Until recently, the idea of the permanent embassy was not in practice and the same thing is also seen in ancient India.

214. Ibid. 6.8-10.

215. Ibid. Chapters. 88-94.

216. Ibid. 6.15-17.

217. Ibid. 158.2-3.

218. ŚP. 86.25-26.

Appendix I

VILLAGE AND CITY ADMINISTRATION

Village administration :

A perusal of ancient works reveals that the Indians had established many local institutions, and the system of village administration actually marks a land mark in the history of our administrative system. The Vedic Āryans knew the importance of local administration, hence the Grāmaṇī was appointed by the king.¹ Grāmaṇī was one of the eleven Ratnins during the later Vedic period. The Jātakas contain numerous references to village administration, and furnish names of posts of officers attached to the villages. Kauṭilya² presents more or less a clear cut picture of village administration. The epic also contains some materials regarding the aspects of local administration but the treatment of this subject is not very systematic.

According to the theorists of the Mbh. village is the lowest unit of administration and the kings are required to establish many units of villages. It refers to the units of 1, 10, 20,¹100 and 1000 villages respectively.³ The village units are based on the decimal system, although it is difficult to find out the exact reason for adopting this system, but, most probably it was adopted for the convenience of the administrative machinery. Kauṭilya also has referred to the village units of 5, 10, 200, 400 and 800 villages respectively.⁴ A comparative study of these lists shows that the Arthaśāstra is in favour of larger numbers of villages to be grouped under the village-units than the Mbh. This type of arrangement may have been favoured

1. Śat. Br. 5.1.1.12.

2. K.A. 2.1.

3. ŚP. 88.3-4.

4. K.A. 2.1.35.

on account of the establishment of a vast empire under the Maurya kings.

The village units according to the Mbh. should be placed under the charge of officers of different ranks in order to look after the welfare works of the villages. The head of the unit of one village is referred to as Grāmika,⁵ Grāmasyādhipati⁶ or Grāmādhipati. Likewise, the heads of the units of 10, 20, 100 and 1000 villages were known as Daśagrāmādhipati, Viṃśyādhipati, Grāmaśatādhyaksha and Sahasrapati respectively.⁷ Manu also refers to these village-heads.⁸ A very late inscription refers to the officer known as Dasa-grāmika.⁹

The epic does not throw light on the duties of these officers, but furnishes only a few references that they should look after the villages, and send reports to their higher officers in-charge of village administration.¹⁰ Manu also advances the same opinion regarding the duties of the village-heads.¹¹ But, the epic does not furnish any information regarding the subject matter of the reports to be sent to the superior officers. It may be assumed that those were related to the problems of the villages,¹² such as minor disputes, revenue and land's settlement, means of communications, education and so on. Manu, however, gives references to the subject matter of reports which mainly dealt with Grāmadoshas¹³—evils in the villages. The epic also refers to the Grāmadoshas which were to be looked into by the village-heads. Those officers-in-charge of the village administration looked after the interests

5. ŚP. 88.3-4.

6. Anuśāsana. 96.34.

7. ŚP. 88.3-8.

8. Manu. 7.115.

9. Khalimpur plate of Dharmapāla.

10. ŚP. 88.4-5.

11. Manu. 7.16.17.

12. Ibid.

13. ŚP. 88.4.

of the villagers and performed multifarious works for their welfare.

According to the theorists of the Mbh. the village heads should be paid adequate salary for their support. In this connection, we are informed that Bhojyāni realised from one village should be utilised by the Grāmika, but he should offer some of its portion to the village-head of the unit of ten villages. Those officers had to support themselves by offering some portions to the head of the unit of 20 villages.¹⁴ The term Bhojyāni stands for the things which are to be utilised daily by the village-officers such as foodgrains, vegetables and oil etc. The above articles were realised from the villagers in the form of revenue, or more particularly as Bali. But the epic does not throw light on the percentage in the Bhojyāni which is to be offered to the heads of the units of ten and twenty villages. It informs us that the Grāmaśatādhyaksha may enjoy the complete revenue realised from one village. But the village should be large, densely populated, prosperous, and the management of the village should be in-charge of many officers,¹⁵ in order that the Grāmaśatādhyaksha may not exploit the villagers. The Sahasrapati should enjoy the revenue realised from a śākhānagara or the suburb of a town in the form of foodgrains, gold and one-sixth of the agricultural produce. But, a portion of it must be offered to the Rāshṭriya.¹⁶ The term Rāshṭriya is very significant. He is placed over the Sahasrapatis. His post may be equated to the post of Governor of the present times. The epigraphic references also confirm our contention as the Giranāra Prasasti of Rudradāmana dated 150 A.D. refers to Vaiśya Pushyagupta and Tushāspa, the Rāshṭriyas of Saurāshṭra during the reign of Chandragupta and Aśoka respectively.¹⁷ All

14. Ibid. 88.6.

15. Ibid. 88.7-8.

16. Ibid. 88.8-9.

17. Sircar, D. C., op.cit., p. 171.

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these references show that the village heads of 1, 10, 20 and 100 villages received their salaries in kind, but the Sahasrapati and Rāshṭriya received their salary both in cash and kind. Manu also informs us that the same types of salaries were given to different heads in-charge of the village administration,¹⁸ but he does not refer to the Rāshṭriya.

A study of the ancient Indian village councils shows that each council consisted of five members, who were required to perform works for the welfare of villagers. Nārada enquires from Yudhisṭhira whether in his Janapada councils consisting of five persons discharged their duties or not?¹⁹ Here, the Mbh. refers to the village-councils each having five members. It furnishes references to the specific requisites of the members of the village-councils, such as that they should be brave, wise and pious, should have purities of ideas and must be persons of good character.²⁰ But, there isn't any reference to the process of election to the village-council, and even the tenure of their membership also is not referred to. The Mbh. does not refer to the works which are to be performed by them, but on the basis of other positive references, we may get some information in this regard. Possibly, their works are related to the safety of life and property of the villagers from the anti-social elements. They settled minor disputes under their jurisdiction, made arrangements for laying out roads, provided the villages with means of irrigation, established schools, and realised revenue from the villagers which were finally deposited in the treasury of the state. The Mbh. lays stress on the protection of villages for the protection of the cities, as well as for the enrichment of the treasury, because they happen to be the fundamental sources of income to the state.

18. Manu. 7.18-19.

19. Sabhā. 5.70.

20. Ibid. 5.70.

As regards the means for undertaking works for the welfare of villagers, the Mbh. does not throw light, but it may be supposed that the village-council, perhaps, got some share in the revenue realised from the villagers, and with its help, it carried out the works for the uplift of villagers. The Vishti or forced labour was utilised by the village-council for executing the works.

The village councils were autonomous in internal affairs, and worked within their jurisdiction. In this connection R. K. Mukherjee observes that India presents a rare remarkable phenomenon of the state and the society co-existing and apart from it in some degree of independence of each other as distinct and separate units or entities, as independent centres of national, popular and collective life and activity. Both of them were independent organisms with distinct and well defined structures and functions of their own and laws of growth and evolution.²¹ But, this remark is not applicable to the system of the village administration as gleaned from the Mbh. as it refers to the Govt. control on the village-councils through the officers appointed by the state, who looked into the Grāmadoshas and received their salaries in the form of Bhoj-yāni or provisions realised from the villagers. Besides, the Mbh. instructs the king to appoint a Dharmajña-sachiva as incharge of the village administration for supervising the works done by the heads of the units of the villages. The description of the position of Sachiva clearly shows that he exerted great influence on the village-heads of different categories.²² It is very difficult to say in clear terms regarding the actual scope of autonomy enjoyed by the villages. Further, it is not clear whether members of the village-councils were nominated by the village officers or were elected by the villagers. The state controlled the village-councils as it appears from discussion above, but it does not mean that the former

21. Mukherjee, R. K., LG. AI., p. 3.

22. ŚP. 88.9-10.

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interfered in every day life of the latter. We have references to show that the will of the villagers prevailed as far as the question of raising the rates of taxes was concerned, and for this, the king had to place his arguments for final consideration. It seems that in settling minor disputes by the village-councils, the state did not interfere and allowed villagers to execute the works for their welfare.

Thus, the Mbh. contains scanty references regarding village administration, but it throws useful light on some of its aspects which forms an important chapter of the history of village administration in ancient India.

City administration :

In ancient India, villages were the centres of agricultural and industrial productions, but the cities were the nerve-centre of political and commercial life of the country. The administrative headquarters were established in the cities, and the capital-city was the residential place of the king. The Mbh. refers to a large number of cities, both civil and military, such as Hastināpur, Ahichchhatrā, Rājgrīha, and Dvārakā etc. The city affairs could not be managed without the existence of a well organised and a regular administrative body. There are numerous references to that effect in the Mbh. and a critical perusal would help us in forming a clear cut picture.

It seems that during the compositional period of the epic, there existed a large number of treatises on matters relating to the cities, such as the planning and administrative system. Nārada enquires from Yudhisṭhira whether he had studied the Nāgarasūtram²³ or not? He asks this question while making enquiries about the treatises on military sciences, which he was required to study. The forts also formed an important element in the nation's defence, hence the Nāgara-

sūtram was to be studied by the king. The Sūtras contained matters relating to the forts and cities. The king had to do many things for the welfare of the citizens. At present, the Nāgarasūtram as referred to in the epic, is not available, hence it is very difficult to assume anything about the subject matters exactly contained therein.

The affairs of the city administration cannot be carried out without the help of a well organised machinery. The epic refers to the existence of the councils, each consisting of five members in the Janapada of Yudhisṭhira who were to carry out the works related to the Janapada. This term Janapada denotes the rural areas as well as the territory of a state which includes both cities and villages alike. If we accept this logical interpretation of the term Janapada, then there should be no objections in assuming that the city-council consisting of five members looked after the city-affairs. This hypothesis becomes more clear when the epic furnishes many technical terms regarding the city-administration. But there is only generalised reference to the subject in the epic and it does not discuss the topic like Kauṭilya.²⁴ It is not known whether its members were elected by the citizens or were nominated by the Govt.

The Mbh. refers to the Nagarādhikṛita,²⁵ officer-in-charge of city administration of Varāṇāwatanagara. Such technical terms are frequently found in the inscription of the Gupta period. This term apparently shows the existence of a regular administrative body, whose main purpose was to look after the needs of the citizens. The Mbh. does not refer to the specific requisites to be possessed by the city-mayor and the functions to be performed by him, but it may be assumed that like Nāgaraka,²⁶ he also divided the city-area into many administrative blocks and got the city-walls repaired. He

24. K.A. 2.36.

25. Adi. 134.7.

26. K.A. 2.36.

managed other affairs such as the construction of roads, digging of wells and tanks for the purpose of water supply, plantation of gardens, prevention of conflagration, organisation of Police force for the protection of life and property of the citizens, establishment of hospitals and providing support to those who recreate people by their acrobatic or artistic performances.

It seems that besides the Mayor, there was a special officer known as the Sarvārthachintaka who was posted in every city to supervise over the works done or to be done by the officers-in-charge of the city administration.²⁷ He was required to engage other officers in their duties. The above designation reveals that he was an executive officer who chalked out plans and got them executed with the help of other officers. He thought of the means to be adopted for the welfare of all, hence he has rightly been designated as the Sarvārthachintaka. Manu also refers to this officer in connection with the city administration.²⁸

Cities were the political and commercial centres, hence the state had to take adequate measures for their protection. The epic suggests that cities should be protected with strong ramparts and gateways.²⁹ The city walls should be provided with adequate numbers of gateways built on proper places and should be provided with war weapons.³⁰ The city's protection is of special importance, and the epic regards it as one of the means for ensuring the prosperity of the state.³¹ Cities were not only the economic and the political centres but they also served as strongholds of defence. Hastināpur, Rājagṛiha and Dvārakā were well fortified cities. Kauṭilya³² advises Nāgaraka to inspect the city-walls and repair the damaged

27. ŚP. 88.9-10.

28. Manu. 7.121.

29. Aśrama. 5.16.

30. Ibid. 5.17.

31. ŚP. 58.9.

32. K.A. 2.36.

portions. The Rāmāyaṇa³³ asserts that it is the king's duty to protect the capital town.

Protection of citizens is one of the prominent aspects of the city administration, and it has been suggested that the code of Brahmā also dealt with it.³⁴ The epic informs us that police officers should be appointed along with other assistants for protecting the citizens of the cities established on plains and in mountainous regions.³⁵ Kauṭilya refers to the Police Officers-in-charge who were to protect the life and prosperity of the citizens.³⁶

During the war period, it was difficult to protect citizens and their property, hence the king had to take adequate measures for ensuring their protection. The king had to build watch-towers on the city walls, and holes were made in the upper portions of walls for discharging arrows on the enemies. The moat was filled with water, and it was provided with dangerous fish, and other devices for creating hindrances in the way of the enemies.³⁷ Kauṭilya suggests that the king should take measures while establishing new forts in order to protect the inhabitants of the city during war times.³⁸

In cities, thefts were but natural. Other crimes like adultery and murder etc. were also committed. It was the duty of the king to check such unlawful acts by punishing those who violated the law. According to the thinkers of the Mbh. fines realised from persons who violate the ten Dharmas should be spent for protection of the Pura.³⁹ The police captured the culprits and judicial officers punished them.

Cities were the most busy places, hence the enemies sent spies in disguise for finding out the secrets of the other party.

33. Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa, 100.42.

34. ŚP. 59.70.

35. Sabhā. 5.72.

36. K.A. 2.35.

37. ŚP. 69.41.

38. K.A. 2.3.

39. ŚP. 69.25.

The king should also send his own spies in disguise of fools, deaf and blind, or in other forms to the cities in order to find out the enemy's spies.⁴⁰ They should be sent to the markets, places of recreation and social gatherings, among the ascetics, to the gardens, learned societies and in the rest houses.⁴¹ Further, they should be sent to the cross-roads and sacred places.⁴² All these measures should be adopted to guard against the foreign spies sent by the enemies. Kauṭilya⁴³ advances similar measures for preventing espionage in the cities.

In ancient India, generally, houses were built either of grasses or wood, hence during summer, there was possibility of their being burnt to ashes, causing unaccountable loss to the life and property of citizens. It was the duty of the king to take proper steps for preventing its occurrence. According to the epic, a king should order the citizens to coat the wall of houses made of grass with mud, and to remove extra grasses outside the city in the beginning of Chaitra.⁴⁴ The people should prepare food at night only, and fire should not be ignited in the day except in case of Agnihotra. In the maternity houses, it should be cautiously lighted and preserved. Further, the king should punish those in whose houses inflaming fire would be seen in the day. All these steps are to be taken for the protection of the cities.⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that Kauṭilya⁴⁶ also refers to such measures to be adopted by the Nāgaraka in order to prevent conflagration for the protection of life and property of the citizens.

Roads are essential for easy means of communications in the busy life of the cities, hence, the king should build wide and

40. Ibid. 69.8-10.

41. Ibid. 69.11-12.

42. Ibid. 69.50.

43. K.A. 2.36.

44. ŚP. 69.45.

45. Ibid. 69.46-49.

46. K.A. 2.36.

long roads.⁴⁷ The description of decorated roads and lanes in the cities like Hastināpur and others indicates that the city administrator took care of the roads, and it was his duty to build them. But the epic does not enlighten us on minute details of road construction or their lay out, as discussed in the Arthaśāstra.⁴⁸

In the city life, markets are very useful. So the epic asserts that market should be established⁴⁹ inside the city walls but more details are not available in this regard. Perhaps, a special officer under the Mayor looked after the management of the markets, but details regarding this are lacking in the Mbh.

The cities were generally established on the banks the rivers, so there did not exist the problem of water supply. Besides, a large number of wells were dug out to augment the supply of water to the citizens. But the state had to do something more in this field. In the city, new wells were dug out and the old ones were repaired and kept clean.⁵⁰ The Mbh. instructs the king to establish Prapā⁵¹ or centres for the supply of water to those who come to the city or reside therein. Mostly, the Prapās were established on roadsides.

The ancient Indian state stood for the people's happiness and had to provide medical facilities for maintaining a high standard of healthy life. The Mbh. therefore, instructs the king to collect all types of medicines⁵² and appoint four types of physicians.⁵³ It does not refer to the particular types of physicians, but probably there were doctors who cured those who took poison. There were surgeons who cured the wounds. Physicians cured patients with the application of medicinal

47. ŚP. 67.51.

48. K.A. 2.4.

49. ŚP. 69.51.

50. Ibid. 69.44.

51. Ibid. 69.51.

52. Ibid. 69.54.

53. Ibid. 69.57.

herbs. The doctors versed in witchcraft removed the spirits and epidemics by performing rites and reciting the Atharva-vedic hymns. The Mbh. refers to the Arishtaśālā⁵⁴ in which the fire was preserved cautiously. This refers to maternity house or hospital in general. The foregoing description reveals that the state took much care for the health of citizens by providing them with medicines, doctors and hospitals. Kauṭilya⁵⁵ refers to the physicians in connection with the city administration. Historical illustrations regarding this are not lacking. Aśoka in one of his edicts informs us of the establishment of maternity houses, and civil and veterinary hospitals within and outside his empire.⁵⁶

The Mbh. refers to the means of recreation in the city's life. There are references to the Vihāras, Samāja, Ārāma and gardens along with the Sabhā in cities where the spies were deputed to find out the secret informations. It seems that those were public-places where the citizens came for recreation and other purposes.⁵⁷ According to the thinkers of the epic, it is the duty of the king to provide citizens with the means of recreation by patronising the acrobats, dancers, wrestlers and musicians.⁵⁸ During the war period, the king should expel beggars, cart-drivers, impotents and others.⁵⁹ This measure was adopted when the city of Dvārakā was invaded by king Śālva. This proves that the state during peacetime, supported artists for recreating the people. The Mbh. refers to the Nartanāgāra built by king Virāṭa.⁶⁰ Again, we have many references to the Samāja being celebrated by the people, and it was regarded as a characteristic feature of a

54. Ibid. 69.47.

55. K.A. 2.36.

56. R.E. 2nd.

57. ŚP. 69.8-12.

58. Ibid. 69.58.

59. Ibid. 69.49.

60. Virāṭa. 23.17-18.

good administration. Kauṭilya⁶¹ also refers to the drama-hall in the cities and advises the Nāgaraka to provide the citizens with the means of recreation. The Hāthīgumphā inscription of Khāravela which belongs to the compositional period of our epic narrates different measures which were adopted by the king for the recreation of his subjects both in villages and cities.

Now, the question arises as to what were the financial resources for carrying out all those activities? The Mbh. does not enlighten us on this point any more, except, by suggesting that the fines realised from the culprits in the city should be spent for its protection. But, those fines only were not sufficient to finance the city administration. It seems that the markets, artisans, traders, and others were the sources of revenue. The state also assisted the city administration in this respect, but regarding this there is not any concrete evidence in the epic.

All these references point to the existence of a prosperous city life. The internal evidences also confirm our hypothesis. A large number of inscriptions and seals belonging to the compositional period of the epic furnish details of city-administration.

Appendix II

GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT TERMS

A

Adaṇḍa	- One who does not inflict punishment, without punishment.
Adhvaryu	- An officiating priest.
Agnihotra	- Offering oblations to the sacrificial fire.
Agrahāra	- Rent-free land given to Brāhmaṇas.
Ahimsā	- Non-violence.
Amitrabala	- Enemy's army.
Angulitra	- Devices for protecting fingers.
Amka	- Number, appellation, figures, mark, sign.
Amkuśa	- A hook, a goad.
Anvayaprāptasāchivya	- Hereditary ministership.
Anāgatavidhātā	- Knower of future happenings.
Anāyaka	- Without a guide.
Apramatta	- Alertness, opposite of negligence.
Arājaka	- Without a king.
Artha	- Money, materials, aim.
Arthadaṇḍa	- Fine.
Arthadūshṇa	- Causing material loss without valid cause.
Arthasiddhi	- Success in obtaining materials.
Aśmanah	- Stone chips.
Aśvabandha	- Horse attendant.
Aśvamedha	- Horse sacrifice.
Aśvādhyaksha	- Superintendent of horses.
Aśvaśālā	- A stable.
Aśuchi	- Impure.
Avipāla	- A shepherd.

Audakadurga	- The fort built on an island or in a riverine region.
Āchārya	- Chief Priest, Guru.
Ānaka	- A musical instrument.
Ārāma	- A grove.
Āsrama	- Hermitage, stages of life.
Ātavika	- Forest people.
Āyudhāgāra	- Arsenal.
Āyudhāgārādhyaksha	- Superintendent of arsenal.

B

Bahuchintanam	- To think over counsel by many.
Bala	- Army, power.
Balādhikaraṇa	- Military Office.
Bali	- Voluntary gift and tribute.
Bheda	- Dissension.
Bheri	- A musical instrument.
Bhikshu	- A mendicant.
Bhindipāla	- A musical instrument.
Bhojanam	- Meal.
Bhojyāni	- Provisions.
Bhuṣuṇḍi	- A weapon, probably a missile.
Brahmacharya	- Celibacy, Seeker after god.
Brahmadeya	- Gift to a Brāhmaṇa.

C

Chaitra	- First month of Hindu Calender, it corresponds to March.
Chaitya	- A Stūpa, an object of worship, an enclosure around the abandoned sacrificial spot, something raised on the mortal remains of the dead.
Chaityavṛksha	- A worshipable tree.
Chakraraksha	- Protector of wheels.
Charma	- shield.
Chaturaṅgiṇi	- Four fold divisions of army.

D

Daivajña	- One who forecasts, an astrologer.
Dama	- Check, control.
Danḍa	- Punishment, staff, army.
Danḍanīti	- Science of government.
Danḍavid	- One who knows the art of inflicting proper punishment.
Darśana	- To have vision, philosophy.
Dasyu	- Dacoit.
Dasyudharma	- Dacoity.
Dāna	- Gift.
Dānaśīla	- One who is liberal in offering gifts.
Deśika	- A guide.
Dhanurveda	- Military science.
Dharma	- Duty, law, moral virtues.
Dharmachakra	- Wheel of religion or morality.
Dharmajñasachiva	- A minister acquainted with moral laws.
Dharmadūṣhaṇa	- Corrupting moral laws.
Dharmapāla	- Protector of moral values.
Dharmasthāpāna	- Regulating moral values.
Dharmavāhya	- The person who does not follow moral values.
Daśāparādha	- Ten offences.
Digvijaya	- Conquest of world.
Dīrghasūtrī	- One who works slowly and does not complete the work in time.
Dosha	- Fault, evil.
Dṛḍhavrata	- One who is firm in his vows.
Dundubhi	- Drum.

G

Gadā	- A club.
Gajāgāra	- An apartment for keeping elephant.
Gāndhāra	- Eastern Afghanistan and N. W. Pakistan.

Gaṇaka	- An Officer-in-charge of counting, a village accountant.
Gavādhyaksha	- Superintendent of cattle.
Ghāṭa	- Crossing place on the side of the river.
Ghosha	- Farm for cattle rearing.
Gopālaka	- Cowherd.
Goptā	- Protector, king, provincial governor.
Gosaṁkhya	- Officer-in-charge of maintaining accounts of cattle.
Gośṛṅga	- A musical instrument.
Govishāṇaka	- -do-
Grāmaṇi	- Village headman.
Grāmika	- Village chief.
Grihapati	- Lord of the household.

H

Hala	- Plough.
Hastisādin	- Elephant's trainer.
Havi	- Oblation.
Himsā	- Violence, injury.
Hināṅga	- Physically handicapped.

J

Jaghanya	- Vilest, lowest, worst, censurable.
Jātidharma	- Tribal law.
Jivasanjivana	- Nourishing the Jīvas.

K

Kali	- Evils, suffering, one of the four Yugas.
Kamaṇḍalu	- A pot used by the mendicants.
Kaṇṭakaśodhana	- Removing thorns, eradicating criminals, criminal justice.

Kara	- Tax in general, rent, dues, tributes.
Karman	- Deed.
Kālavid	- The person who knows the time factors.
Kāma	- Desire, beautiful material enjoyment.
Kamboja	- Present north western Afghanistan known as Kafirstan.
Khaṅga	- A sword.
Khanaka	- a miner.
Kosha	- Treasure.
Koshāgāra	- Treasury.
Koshakshaya	- Decline in treasure.
Koshthāgāra	- Granary.
Koṭi	- A part of bow.
Krakacha	- A musical instrument.
Kṛityā	- A female deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purpose.
Kṛitayuga	- The golden age.
Kshaya	- Decline.
Kshepaṇīya	- Gulel.
Kula	- Family.
Kuladharmā	- Family traditions.
Kulasamgha	- Confederation of families, a republican state.

L

Laguḍa	- staff.
Lakshana	- Distinctive mark or sign, characteristic.
Lakshmi	- Goddess of wealth, material prosperity.
Lekhaka	- Writer, accountant.
Liṅgin	- Having a mark or sign, hypocritical.
Lobhopahatachetas	- A greedy one.

Lokadharmā	- The ways of the world.
Lokayātrāvighātaka	- Anti-social elements.
Lokārādhana	- Serving the people, peoples welfare.
Loshṭha	- A clod, a lump of earth.

M

Madhyama	- Middle, intermediate.
Mantra	- Policy, counsel, deliberation.
Mantrachintā	- To formulate state's counsel.
Mantradhara	- A counsellor.
Mantragriha	- Counsel-room.
Mantragupti	- Secret counsel, preservation of counsel.
Mantraniśchaya	- Final decision of counsel.
Mantrin	- A minister.
Mahāparākramah	- A valiant hero.
Mahāvīryaḥ	- A man of great prowess.
Maryādā	- A limit, the bounds of morality.
Mauhūrtika	- An astrologer.
Mānasaputra	- Creation of the mind.
Māthura	- A person of Mathurā.
Mitrāḍhya	- A person having numerous friends.
Mlechchha	- A dirty barbarian.
Mlechchhavāchā	- Language of the dirty barbarians.
Moksha	- Liberation, release.
Mṛidaṅga	; A musical instrument.
Mudgara	- a hammer.
Mukhya	- Chief, main.
Mūsala	- A pestle, a mace.

N

Nakhara	- A weapon, a finger-nail.
Nartanāgāra	- Dancing-hall.
Nāgarika	- A citizen.
Nāgarasūtram	- Treatise dealing with cities.

- Nāstika - One who has no faith in the Vedas
or one who does not believe in the
existence of god.
- Nāṭyaśālā - Drama-hall.
- Niyoga - Appointed duty, a custom which per-
mitted a childless married lady to
have inter-course with any near
kinsman of her husband for pre-
creation.
- Niti - Policy, guide line.
- Nyagrodha - A fig tree.

P

- Paṇava - A sort of musical instrument.
- Paraśvadha - A battle ox.
- Parigha - An iron club.
- Parihāra - Tax free land or village, privileges
of the donee of rent free holdings.
- Parishad - A council.
- Paṭaha - A drum.
- Pattiśa - A kind of spear.
- Paura - A citizen.
- Paurakāryahitānveshi - The person engaged in performing
the welfare works of the citizens.
- Pālanam - Nourishment.
- Pāpakarmā - Evil doer.
- Pārvata - Belonging to the mountainous regions.
- Pashanda - Religious sects, hypocrisy.
- Pātāla-loka - The last of the seven regions under
the earth.
- Pradipa - Lamp.
- Prakṛiti - Element, constituent, subjects.
- Prajñāprāsāda - Faculty of wisdom.
- Pratijñā - Vow, oath.
- Pratoda - whip.

Pratyutpannamati	- Possessed of presence of mind, ready witted.
Prāṇabhṛita	- Nourisher of lives.
Prāṇadāna	- Gift of life.
Prāyaśchita	- Atonement, expiation.
Purādhyaksha	- Mayor.
Puragupti	- Protection of the city.
Purāṇa	- Old, works dealing with past happenings.
Purohita	- A priest.

R

Rakshiṇa	- Police, guard.
Rakshādikaraṇa	- Military office.
Rathaśālā	- A chariot shed.
Rathin	- A warrior who fights from a chariot, riding in a carriage.
Rājadharma	- Duties of a king.
Rājakoshagoptā	- Treasury guard.
Rājaśāstra	- Polity.
Rājaśāstrapranētā	- Pioneer in the field of polity, promulgator of new political views.
Rājasūya	- Coronation ceremony.
Rāshṭropaghātaka	- Enemies of the country.
Ṛishti	- A weapon.
Ṛitvika	- A Priest.

S

Sabhā	- Council, court.
Shaḍaṅgabala	- Sixfold army.
Śakti	- Strength, power, spear.
Samgha	- Confederation, union.
Samghamukhya	- President of a republican state.
Samyak	- Properly.
Samnyāsin	- An ascetic who has completely abandoned material life.

Sadāchāra	- Good conduct.
Samāja	- Social gathering, festivities.
Samśakāra	- Purificatory rites.
Samśaya	- Doubt.
Sandhikarma	- To establish or conclude alliance.
Sandhimoksha	- To break alliance.
Saptāṅga	- Seven elements of state.
Śataghni	- A weapon.
Satya	- Truth, reality.
Satyasandha	- A person true to an agreement.
Satyavrata	- One who observes his vow.
Satyayuga	- Golden age.
Snātaka	- A graduate.
Spashtadanda	- One who has clear vision about inflicting punishment.
Shādgūṇyachintaka	- Minister in-charge of war and peace.
Sāma	- Conciliation.
Sārthavāha	- Leader of caravan of traders.
Śāstra	- Treatise, scripture.
Śīla	- Uprightness.
Śilpavyavahāra	- Business in arts and crafts.
Śikṣhā	- Training, education.
Śivāṅkara	- Doer of welfare.
Śraddhā	- Faith, respect.
Śreṇī	- Guild.
Śreṇībala	- Professional fighters.
Sthāna	- Stagnant, place.
Śulkādhyaksha	- Superintendent of tolls.
Śulkopajivin	- Persons who live on collecting toll taxes, toll officers.
Śūla	- Pike.
Swatantratā	- Freedom.

T

Taḍāga	- A tank.
Tapa	- Penance.

- Tikshṇavarma - A person wearing an armour fitted with sharp nails.
- Tirtha - Place of pilgrimage, a descent into a river, stairs.
- Tomar - A javelin, an iron club.
- Triśūla - Trident.
- Trivarga - Dharma, Artha, Kāma.
- Tūrya - A kind of musical instrument.
- Tyāga - Leaving, abandoning.

U

- Upadhā - Allurement, to bring.
- Upākhyāna - Story.
- Upāya - Remedy, means. It includes Sāma, Dāna, Bheda and Daṇḍa.

V

- Vajra - A weapon of Indra, a thunderbolt.
- Vāhana - Vehicle, conveyance.
- Vedāṅga - Limbs of the vedas.
- Vedi - Altar.
- Veṇuvīṇā - A flute made of bamboo.
- Vidyā - knowledge.
- Vihāra - Monastery, to move, amusement.
- Vittarakshin - Protector of wealth.
- Vrata - vow.
- Vṛiddhi - Increase, growth.
- Vyasana - Bad habits.
- Vyavasthā - A settled rule, arrangement.
- Vyavahāra - Conduct, business.
- Vyūha - Battle order, strategy, a military array.

Y

- Yajña - Sacrifice.

Yajñāyatana	- Place of sacrifice.
Yajñaśila	- Engaged in sacrifices, one who likes to perform sacrifices.
Yathārthadaṇḍa	- Proper punishment.
Yati	- An ascetic.
Yodhāgāra	- Military barracks.
Yuddhadharma	- War as duty.
Yūpa	- Sacrificial pillar or post.

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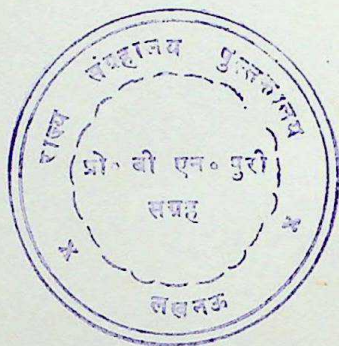
CORRIGENDA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Read</i>	<i>For</i>
1	18	Kaurava	Kuarava
3	1	Interpolations	Interpolatians
7	4	had	has
9	22	have	has
11	27	Nṛipāḥ	Napāḥ
12	28	Hūṇa	Haṇa
14	19	Yueh	Yuen
18	17	Balkh	Balkha
20	24	an	and
25	32	pp. 164-177	pp. 209-222
26	7	was	is
28	16	Chitrāṅgada	Chitrāṅgadā
32	31	Śūdrāḥ	Sudrāḥ
33	10	of	for
41	29	Bhishma	Bhishma
43	17	the	The
46	21	has	have
„	33	Rāma	Rama
47	4	Kachchit	Kachchita
59	12	Rajri	Rajr
67	30	Sarva	Sava
92	1	Aitareya	Aiteraiya
95	9	-do-	-do-
99	11	Vārttā	Vārtā
100	24	Śataghnīs	Śataghnīs
106	19	Aitareya	Aitereya
107	20	Samrāt	Samraṭs
108	27	Aitareya	Aitereya
124	31	pp. 126-127	pp. 156-158
133	4	remove 'the'	
140	19	add 'of' after thinkers	

Page	Line	Read	For
140	19	remove 'of' after epic	
145	22	Vārttā	Vārtā
174	27	add 'to' after had	
148	17	drought	draught
150	12	Anuśāsana	Anuśāsana
153	21	forfeited	forfeicted
153	29	ch. 10, pp. 261-262	
156	21	add 'in' after symbolised	ch. 8, pp. 224-25
„	22	remove 'by' after but	
160	8	giving	Giving
162	23	ineffective	in effective
164	6	-do-	-do-
178	18	Sāvitri	Sāritri
178	25	Aitareya	Aitereya
179	35	ABORI	Abori
180	2	Aitareya	Aitereya
186	4	order	ordcer
187	4	dissension	Dessension
„	28	add 'of' before their	
188	14	The	Tthe
190	14	add 'is' after he	
193	22	add 'have' before sharp	
202	3	give	
„	22	remove 'for'	gave
206	29	Udyoga	Udyga
207	18	faults	boults
208	11	not	ont
219	14	persons	person
224	10	advises	advices
226	15	be	to
228	7	he	be
„	19	performance	perfomance
231	21	essential	esential
234	22	created	creating
239	11	partake	pertake

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Read</i>	<i>For</i>
245	5	illustrations	illustration
250	3	offences	offence
260	1	Ayodhyā	Ayodhā
262	23	he	the
268	16	realisation of	realisational
277	8	his	in
298	10	as	a
300	24	were	where
307	19	remove 'military'	
„	19	spy	espionage
312	3	add 'was' after officers	
352	14	defamation	disfame
376	25	inscriptions	inscription





ABOUT THE BOOK

The book presents a critical study of the political ideas and institution as embodied in the MAHABHARATA. In this work, a breakthrough has been made in respects of dating the compositional period of the epic. The core of the book deals with different aspects of State-craft. The political principles have been fully examined in historical perspective.

THE MAHABHARATA, being a living literature, has influenced the minds of rulers, and thus, has helped them in shaping their own destiny as well as of their people. The work will show that even in changed times, the political theories of the epic, are worth following for maintaining the territorial integrity of the state and for promoting the welfare of the people.